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**THE STERILIZATION**  
**OF THE UNFIT**



*From "The Evening Standard," July 12th, 1929.*

Mr. Justice McCardie, at the last Birmingham Assizes, made a striking declaration in which he urged that a system of sterilization of the unfit should be introduced immediately in this country. He said :—

" For years past I have given very wide reading and much thought to the question of feeble-mindedness. It is one of the great outstanding problems of the day, and I have long since come to the conclusion that the people of this country should at once face the need for the introduction of a system of sterilization.

" I know it is said that public speakers refrain from dealing with this subject, first because it is said that the public are not prepared for it; secondly, because the speakers are too modest to deal with it in adequate fashion.

" In my view sterilization should be introduced at once. I believe it would help greatly towards reducing the grave state of mental deficiency which exists in many parts of the country. I think it is my duty to make this public declaration."

*The Sterilization of*  
*the Unfit*

*By*  
***WALTER M. GALLICHAN***

*LONDON*  
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# CHAPTER I

## A NATIONAL PERIL



## CHAPTER I

### A NATIONAL PERIL

THE chief problem for the nations of the West is how to arrest the threatened decay. A few far-sighted legislators recognize the early signs of dissolution; but the student of human evolution, the scientific historian, the psychologist, and the sociologist are fully aware how serious are the indications of racial degeneration and of "the decline of the West." A high state of civilization brings its inevitable perils and evils. The gains do not always sufficiently counterbalance the losses.

Paradoxical as it may seem, "the blessings of civilization" are accompanied by an immense increase in the suicide rate, by the appearance of new forms of bodily and mental disease, by growing social unrest and a tendency to revolt, by a spread of crime, and by unemployment, poverty, and indigence. The most cultured communities expend the largest sums upon alcoholic drinks and drugs; and the habitual use of narcotics can be traced to the anxiety, stress, and repressions that are inseparable, under present conditions, from civilized living.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

Material prosperity is largely illusive, and life itself is often sacrificed in its attainment.

While we continue to breed as the cavemen bred, automatically and instinctively, and without thought or regard for the new generation, our future outlook is appalling, and the present is full of menace to the individual, society, and the race. We take pride in the "applied science" that enables us to conquer the air, to converse with an acquaintance in New York while seated in a London office, to beat records of speed in locomotion, and to manufacture gases that will depopulate a city of enemies in a few minutes. We excel in the scientific breeding of horses, cows, dogs, cats, pigeons, and rabbits; but the production of superior men and women we leave to chance. The highly prolific Unfit of the Western world are increasing in tens of thousands, while we are concerned with preserving a pure strain of Sealyham terriers and super-Angora rabbits. The average citizen gives little or no thought to humaniculture, the production of superior men and women, efficient for industry, social responsibility, and healthy parentage.

The common apathy in the face of a tremendous national peril is, in itself, a symptom of the general unfitness, which ranges from complete imbecility, insanity, and the minor neuroses to defective intelligence, an arrested curiosity concerning vital matters, the prohibition of thought, aboulia, and a hatred of knowledge. This fatal irresponsibility can only be diminished by persistent advertisement of the fact

## A NATIONAL PERIL

that we are approaching the most alarming crisis in our national history.

Only within the past year or two has the Press of this country shown any inclination to assist a comparatively small and obscure band of patriots, who are apprehensive for the welfare of the State and the community. All discussion of eugenics, the science of human improvement by healthy mating, was taboo in the mass of British journals. The few newspapers that admitted articles on the theme of race regeneration provided handicaps for writers that frequently reduced the text to absurdity. The mention of "sterilization" was the signal for the use of the editorial blue pencil. In popular expositions of Voronoff's rejuvenation method, "monkey gland" is not explained, and a large number of readers imagine that the gland is the thyroid.

But editors are awakening to the fact that a growing number of the public are beginning to be interested in race improvement, and to-day newspapers with a wide circulation publish articles by well-known eugenists. There are moderately priced books on the subject; but they are not sufficiently advertised. The newspapers are unquestionably the best media for introducing the topic to the mass of the population.

Quite naturally, there has been angry opposition to eugenics. This has arisen through misconception of the term. Propagation of plants and domestic animals has been practised for generations, with

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

extraordinary results, due entirely to the forethought and intelligence of gardeners and breeders. But human propagation is a psychological, or emotional, process, and not simply and solely the result of the prompting of certain hormone fluids in the body at definite recurrent periods. The perfervid, romantic lover is wont to imagine that eugenics endangers freedom in choice of a mate. Such interference with the designs of Eros would be intolerable. No eugenists have recommended such a preposterous measure.

*Eugenics stands for sound, healthy procreation, as opposed to dysgenics, or unsound and unhealthy procreation.* The main principle of the eugenic reformer is reasonable caution in the selection of a mate. In this teaching there is nothing that should cause resistance in the mind of a normally intelligent man or woman. It is merely a commonsense demand for the exercise of a social conscience in the highly important matter of giving life to offspring that will become citizens of the State.

The affairs of a pair of lovers concern only themselves, so long as they do not unite for the begetting of children. When a man and woman reproduce members of a community, they are under a responsibility to that community. Under the present social practice, a pair of imbeciles can hand on their terrible bane to several children. There are many recorded instances of the production of numerous progeny by feeble-minded parents, to which I shall refer in other

## A NATIONAL PERIL

pages. A large number of incurably feeble-minded persons or "aments"—in other words persons lacking mind—produce four or five, or more, illegitimate children, all of whom inherit the parental taint.

Mental deficiency is an inherited misfortune for the individual and society. It is increasing in the higher civilized countries. The segregation of idiots, imbeciles, and the feeble-minded generally cannot alone combat the evil. There are several grades of aments. Some are quite capable of doing simple work, and are able to support themselves. Other types are vicious, amoral, idle, and mischievous, and they become a tax on relatives, or on the nation. Many mental defectives are cunning criminals, habitual tramps, alcoholics, and mendicants, who are often in gaol, or in Poor Law institutions.

An enormous number of feeble-minded men and women are at large, free to propagate their kind in wedlock, or otherwise. It has been suggested that all suspected mental defectives should be rounded up, and confined in institutions, or segregated in colonies. Can the State provide funds for such a costly and vast scheme? It is urged that the feeble-minded, labouring in colonies or workshops, could partly contribute to the cost. There is, however, an immense proportion of aments who are incapable of any task that requires even a moderate reasoning faculty. These incapables must always be kept by the public funds.

A number of mental defectives, that should be

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

certified by the authorities and confined in institutions, are not certified. Persons in the early stage of actual insanity are a menace to the community, and many are not put under restraint until compulsion is employed. In the meantime these psychotics reproduce their kind.

A complete system of segregation would involve an enormous expenditure. At present there are not enough asylums, institutions, and homes to accommodate the ever-increasing number of patients. "The shortage of accommodation for cases both of mental disorder and of mental deficiency continues to cause us grave concern," states the Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Control, 1928.

In 1927 the Board of Control drew attention to the fact that there is a serious shortage of institutions and hospitals for the care of the mentally afflicted. "The position has become critical," say the commissioners. It is becoming more critical every year. Serious over-crowding of the hospitals is inevitable.

"The lack of accommodation becomes every year more serious," states the Report of 1928, "and unless a great effort is made in the immediate future to meet the constantly increasing demands for beds, it will become difficult and even impossible to administer the most important sections of the Mental Deficiency Act. Urgent cases are frequently brought to the notice of the Board in which prompt action is necessary both in the interest of the individual and

## A NATIONAL PERIL

the community. On 1st January, 1928, the number of cases dealt with under the Act in institutions was 20,429. The number for whom such provision is required, taken at the moderate estimate of one per thousand, is 39,067."

The increase of mental defectives is alarming. Local Authorities, during the last six years, have obtained knowledge of 61,522 cases as against 25,470. Owing to the shortage of accommodation in the institutions for Mental Defectives alone, many defectives are sent to mental hospitals. Local Boards in several cases do not realize the serious nature of the situation. The Board of Control point out plainly that "the untrained and uncontrolled defective, left to himself in a highly organized and competitive society, is a menace to the community."

The case is recorded of a family of six mentally defective children born to a feeble-minded mother, the wife of a Welsh collier. All of these children were maintained in institutions at the cost of tax-payers. Other instances are given in the Board of Control Report, 1928, of two families of six, and others of four, in which the mothers are feeble-minded. The community has had the cost of maintaining twenty-nine unfit persons who should never have been born. There is nothing to prevent persons of this type, who are not segregated or sterilized, from producing large families of unfortunates, who, in their turn, may procreate freely.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

Mental deficiency is "the cause of much pauperism, degradation, crime, and disease." Training has had some good results; but the number of unteachable idiots, imbeciles, and defectives of low grade is great. It is almost impossible to control the vast number of more or less irresponsible children, who are continually recruiting the ranks of criminals, wastrels, paupers, and prostitutes. There are "carriers" of mental deficiency, who are not recognized as defective, and are therefore not certifiable. There are mentally sane syphilitics, tubercular subjects, and epileptics, who may hand on the fatal defect of arrested mental development to their descendants. Is it not obvious that present methods of restraint, segregation, and education cannot eradicate amentia? If sterilization became the legal practice in the United Kingdom, feeble-mindedness would become rare, and would probably approach extinction in the future.

Extrinsic deficiency of intelligence, due to brain or other injuries, is unavoidable to a large extent. Accidents are often of the nature of "act of God." But hereditary feeble-mindedness can be controlled deliberately and successfully, by the sterilization operation; and there is no other procedure that can be so effective. Society should say: "These unhappy human beings must not be born to burden the community during their lifetime, and to pass on their terrible heritage to coming generations."

We must protect the fit against the incurable unfit.

## A NATIONAL PERIL

A large proportion of the mental incapables are living at the public cost, and endangering the future of society. In five big American cities it was estimated that 27 per cent. of criminals are feeble-minded by inheritance. Many aments are without a moral sense; they lack a conception of right and wrong, and are quite untrainable in moral behaviour. These amoral types commit serious as well as minor offences of a criminal character. Among them are obsessional train-wreckers, who place obstacles on railway lines and stand by to watch the derailing of trains and the destruction of life, enjoying the excitement of the disaster with a sadistic zest.

A proportion of mental defectives are impulsive incendiaries, pyromaniacs, who fire hayricks, woods, and commons, and sometimes burn down houses. Mischiefous aments, possessing a morbid lust for cruelty to animals, have been detected in maiming cattle.

The simple operation of sterilization is humane. It is practised on entirely sane people of both sexes as a means of rejuvenation, and the results in the vast majority of cases are remarkably beneficial. There is a renewal of physical and mental vigour, a restoration of efficiency for work, improved personal appearance, and the alleviation of many symptoms of premature senility. Vasectomy also cures sexual impotence or subnormal capacity in the majority of instances. But it deprives the subject of generative capacity.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

Mental defectives would be benefited by sterilization, as in the case of normal persons who undergo the operation voluntarily. The sterilizing of the hopelessly unfit is the only prophylactic that can be described as radically effective.

## CHAPTER II

### WHO ARE THE UNFIT?



## CHAPTER II

### WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

A DEFINITION of normality is very difficult. It has been said by psychologists that the normal person does not exist. Every one of us has some physical or mental abnormal, supernormal or subnormal traits. A high-grade mental defective, or moron, may seem to be a fine example of bodily development and health; but he may be almost irresponsible for his actions, and unable to adjust himself in the social scheme. There are brilliant madmen, "learned" idiots, and artistic degenerates, and there are physically infirm persons who are quite sane, and often very useful in the community.

We speak of a "man of normal intelligence." But according to psychological tests, the average intelligence is remarkably low, and very high intelligence extremely rare. Considerably over a million officers and privates of the United States army were examined in regard to intelligence. The result of carefully planned and conducted tests shows men in Grade A, of very superior intelligence, were only

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

4½ per cent. In the class of superior intelligence the percentage was 9. In average intelligence it was 25, and in low average intelligence 20. There were 10 per cent. of "unteachable men," and 15 of "very inferior intelligence."

Lothrop Stoddart says that the investigation shows "that the average mental age of Americans is only about fourteen, and that forty-five millions, or nearly one half of the whole population, will never develop mental capacity beyond the stage represented by a normal twelve-year-old child; that only thirteen and one-half millions will ever show superior intelligence, and that only four and one-half millions can be considered "talented." This author states that "intelligence is to-day being steadily *bred out of* the American population."<sup>1</sup>

The same mental status exists in all the civilized nations of our time, and the chief cause is heredity. The normal and the abnormal are intermixed in all of us, and it is difficult in many cases to distinguish one quality from the other. We are breeding in a prodigal manner from the less and the least intelligent members of the community. The higher the type of animal or man, the smaller the increase of offspring; the lower the type the greater the fecundity. There are good and bad aberrant types of human beings. The "stable-minded" man or woman may be of considerably less value in many instances than the variable, "temperamental" neurotics or mattoids.

<sup>1</sup> "The Revolt Against Civilization."

## WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

We may admit the stable-minded class as average "normal" persons. Are the unstable, therefore, to be classed as abnormal? They cannot be so classed, because affectability, variability, emotionality, and excitability are so common that they must be rated as normal characteristics. It is only when these character traits are excessively developed that we can class them as abnormal. In extremely exaggerated instances the abnormality must be described as pathological.

The vast and increasing number of psychoneurotics and those who dwell in the borderland between sanity and insanity, is so great that we can scarcely place them in the actually abnormal class. We do not call the child who contracts measles "abnormal." On the authority of some mental physicians, psychoneurosis in various forms is to-day almost as common a disorder as measles.

There are thousands of hysterical subjects who cannot be placed among the Unfit. Strictly speaking, the Fit are in the minority, if we mean by fitness a very high development of mental efficiency. The neurotic is frequently a superior type of man or woman, who has become a psychic invalid through a conflict arising from a high moral or religious sense. Often it is a question of a combat between Eros and Ethics.

The psychoneurotic, or neuropathic, subject is entirely cognizant of his mental state, and is puzzled to explain it. He may imagine that he is a very

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

guilty man, through a happening, usually of a sexual nature, that occurred in his youth. A medical friend told me of the strange phobia of a patient who would not hold a live bird in his hand for £1,000. There are sane hypochondriacs and obsessional neurotics, people who are, in some cases, eminently capable in a profession or trade. Claustrophobists who fear confined places, and agarophobists who dread open spaces, are fairly common in all classes of society. Many of us, who claim entire sanity, are monophobia, afraid of being alone.

There is an enormous army of chronic alcoholic addicts, who are judged as quite responsible beings, and some attain celebrity for genius and talent in various activities. Sexually inverted persons of both sexes, of the congenital type (homosexuals), are probably 2 per cent. of the population, and the acquired forms of inversion are probably more numerous. Sex perversion is classed as an abnormality; but its manifestations are extremely common, and some appear to indicate mental degeneration, such as necrophilia, exaggerated sadistic impulses, bestiality, and obsessional exhibitionism. Nevertheless, we regard the mass of perverts indiscriminately as responsible members of the community, and punish their offences severely. Undoubtedly, a considerable number of sexually perverted men and women are fully responsible beings, and apart from their unfortunate tendencies they are frequently useful citizens.

The range of sexual idiosyncrasy is so wide and

## WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

variable that "perversion" is not always readily defined. Many aberrant practices are survivals of primitive impulses, which are now under moral or æsthetic condemnation.

People of the neurotic constitution are probably 70 per cent. of the population, though one of my medical friends thinks that 80 per cent. is the lowest estimate of actually psychoneurotic subjects. Taking the mentally ill alone—for all neurotic persons are not necessarily psychoneurotic in the pathological sense—the proportion is very high in Europe and America. And whereas many of these persons are intellectually above the average, a number of them are borderline cases of insanity, likely to develop psychosis, and to become progenitors of mentally disordered children.

Nevertheless, the psychoneurotics are entirely responsible, and to class them as unfit parents would mean that about 50 per cent. of the community should be under control or inhibited from procreation. It is not essential here to discuss the question of the alleged association of insanity with genius. There have been men and women of genius who have shown actual stigmata of insanity; but, on the other hand, a larger proportion of illustrious geniuses have been supreme examples of a mental superiority approaching perfection.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

### MENTAL DEFICIENCY

No two individuals are mentally quite alike. Any attempt to classify types must be tentative, through the great variability in emotion, temperament, aptitude, and character trends. Among the sane we have divergent types, eccentrics, stable-minded and unstable-minded, tough-minded and tender-minded, malcontents with life, philosophic pessimists, imperturbable optimists, spendthrifts and misers. In the social and moral sense, some of these citizens are more or less anti-social and immoral, and some are criminal offenders. But they are capable of protecting themselves, following a profession or craft, and comprehending the codes of society and the nature of legal prohibitions.

In the defective class we include "those whose mentality is such as to render independent and efficient adaptation impossible, and who consequently need some form of special surroundings or some degree of external assistance, control, or supervision."<sup>1</sup> The mentally deficient may be divided into three main classes. In the first are persons of marked subnormal mental development, which renders them incapable. In class two are the defectives who may be called normally developed, but whose minds are temporarily incapable. According to the latest Report of the Mental Deficiency

<sup>1</sup> "Report of Mental Deficiency Committee, 1929," p. 7.

## WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

Committee, the third class is composed of "those whose minds have similarly reached normal development, but who are undergoing progressive deterioration and decay."

The Ament has been described as a man born poor in intelligence, and incapable of becoming rich, while the Dement is one who was born rich, but has become poor. The first is without mind; the second is de-mented, or "from mind." Dr. A. F. Tredgold defines amentia as "*a state of mental defect from birth, or from an early age, due to incomplete cerebral development, in consequence of which the person affected is unable to perform his duties as a member of society in the position of life in which he is called.*"<sup>1</sup>

Amentia is a diseased condition of mind, and not simply a sign of mental divergence from type, or eccentricity of behaviour. The feeble-minded are sufferers from a congenitally impoverished reasoning faculty or from arrested brain development. The term amentia includes idiots, imbeciles, and the feeble-minded, or high-grade defectives.

### THE PREVALENCE OF UNFITNESS

It was stated some years ago by Dr. Tredgold and others, that the official returns of the feeble-minded of any country were "so unreliable and incomplete that no useful purpose would be served by quoting

<sup>1</sup> "Mental Deficiency : Amentia," p. 2.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

them." In 1904 nine areas in England, two in Wales, one in Scotland, and four in Ireland were examined, the aggregate population of the areas being 3,873,151.<sup>1</sup> In sixteen areas the mean average of amentia was 38·28 per 1,000 of the population. The highest incidence, over 4 per 1,000, was in Dublin, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Lincolnshire, and Galway.

The lowest rate, under 3 per 1,000 persons, was in Hull, Glasgow, Belfast, Durham, and Cork. An approximate estimate of Dr. Tredgold, in 1906, shows the number of aments 138,529. One in every 248 persons was feeble-minded. In an appendix to his valuable work, he states that beyond the 11,270 aments, certified at that date under the Lunacy Acts, there were at least 5 per cent. among the inmates of county and borough asylums, approximately 4,450. At the time of this inquiry, Dr. Tredgold estimated that the number of defectives "urgently in need of provision at the present time, inclusive of feeble-minded children," was 61,525.

The 1929 Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee has many alarming facts relative to the prevalence of feeble-mindedness, imbecility, and idiocy. In six areas there were 8·7 mental defectives per 1,000 population. Approximately one half of these are adults and the other half children. This estimate does not refer to the whole country, but to the areas examined. It was found that of the 4·18

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, A. F. Tredgold, p. 5.

## WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

per cent. of affected children 3·36 were feeble-minded, 67 imbeciles, and 15 idiots.

In a mining district there were 18·69 per 1,000 children between the ages of seven and sixteen in the school population. There is very little difference in the proportion of amentia between the two sexes, though in a cotton town and a Welsh area, the girls exceeded the number of boys. In the former area there was the highest incidence among adults, 3·65 per 1,000 total population, and the mining region was 3·41.

Taking the whole of England and Wales, the mean incidence of mental deficiency is about 8 per 1,000 population. The latest estimate of the number of the mentally unfit is double that of the report of the Royal Commission in 1906.<sup>1</sup> Mental deficiency has increased in the rural districts during the past twenty years, chiefly through the fact that the feeble-minded are not adventurous, and do not migrate to the towns to any large extent. There are now approximately 288,600 adult and child aments of all grades and ages in England and Wales. Within the meaning of the Mental Deficiency Act the full number of persons of all ages who are alive in England and Wales would be 250,000.

The irresponsibility of the ament class is shown by the rate of illegitimate births. In most cases these unwanted and incapable children are supported by the State. The following, from the Board of

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, Report for 1929.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

Control Report, 1927, is a typical instance of the fatal heritage of amentia :

" Mentally defective woman, had seven illegitimate children.

" 1. Daughter, aged 24, low grade, feeble-minded, under care in Mental Deficiency Institution since October, 1925; has had an illegitimate child.

" 2. Son, in Industrial School, mental condition not known.

" 3. Daughter, 13, feeble-minded, inmate of Residential Special School.

" 4. Daughter, aged 12, now an inmate of Residential Special School after having contracted venereal disease.

" 5. Daughter, aged 11, low grade, feeble-minded, inmate of Residential School since February, 1927.

" 6. Son, aged 8, feeble-minded, inmate of Mental Deficiency Institution since February, 1927."

The investigator for the Board comments : " No one can dispute that mental deficiency is the fundamental cause of much pauperism and of a great deal of petty and serious crime. It is also the fundamental cause of much ineptitude. Mental deficiency is intimately allied with insanity. Further, mentally defective parents do not and cannot respond to the health and hygienic instruction which is having so great an influence."

## WHO ARE THE UNFIT?

Mental defectives are not classified as lunatics. They have not lost what they never possessed, a normal reasoning capacity. Besides the vast army of idiots, imbeciles, and the feeble-minded, we have a large host of insane persons in public and private institutions, hospitals, and nursing homes. In England and Wales, in 1928, there were 138,293 notified insane persons under control. There was an increase of 1,667 cases in 1927.

A considerable proportion of congenital defectives become insane. Among the congenitally normal persons, who develop insanity, many are married and have had families before being certified as positively psychotic cases. Epileptics marry, and hand on epilepsy or mental disorder to their heirs. This disease is probably psychogenic, or of mental origin, in the opinion of some psychological inquirers. It is certainly a cause of amentia in offspring. Epilepsy of a severe form may produce mental degeneration and dementia, and the stress of modern life is a contributing factor to this malady. The children of epileptics who are born aments are among the most serious cases.



## CHAPTER III

### THE MENACE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED



## CHAPTER III

### THE MENACE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

IN this chapter I will set down briefly the results of scientific expert inquiry into the causes, exciting factors, and signs of mental deficiency of various types. Arrested development of the mind is shown in its severest examples in the idiot, who in the adult age possesses the intelligence of a child of three years. In imbecility there is a slightly higher cerebral development and glimmerings of reasoning faculty. The moron is a more intelligent person than the idiot or imbecile, but his mind is plainly undeveloped and his behaviour often childish and irresponsible.

### THE CAUSES OF AMENTIA

Primary, intrinsic, or inherent mental defectiveness has a subtle cause in the generative cells; but there are many contributing or exciting factors. It is generally accepted by investigators in all countries that the ament possesses imperfect brain cells. There are various factors that may produce this state of cerebral maldevelopment or arrest. Among them are disorders of the nervous system in the parents,

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

tuberculosis, chronic ineptitude, and syphilis. The marriage of near kin, especially of a similar physical and mental type, is another admitted factor.

It is considered that the age of parents at the time of procreation is a cause of amentia in some cases. It has been proved by research that the children of a man under twenty or over forty are likely to be feeble as compared with those of a father of from twenty-five to forty, and that the same applies to the children born to women over forty. Matthews Duncan believed that very early and late marriage were causes of idiocy.<sup>1</sup>

Hereditary feeble-mindedness descends from one or both parents, and it is probably as frequent in one sex as in the other. The largest proportion of aments inherit their disability from parents suffering from nervous maladies. The family history generally shows insanity or epilepsy, and the tendency to feeble-minded symptoms may be traced to paralysis in the stock.

The relation of alcoholic intemperance in the progenitors is very marked. Many of the cases are traceable to a heritage derived from parents who were habitual topers. Dr. Tredgold is, however, of the opinion that alcoholism alone is "rarely the immediate and sole cause of amentia, although where other factors exist—particularly neuropathic heredity—it is a most important contributory agent."

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. A. F. Tredgold, *op. cit.*, Chapter III, for a full inquiry of causation.

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It seems to be proved that the poison of alcohol acts upon the embryo in the womb of a woman who is a constant and excessive drinker, and the result on offspring may be mental degeneration in its most severe forms. Another racial poison, syphilis, is contributory to some cases of amentia. Consumption is often noted in the parents and relatives of the feeble-minded.

Tuberculosis, combined with alcoholism and nervous disease, probably accounts for most cases of amentia. There does not appear to be one sole cause for mental deficiency, but varied factors and contributing accessories.

### SECONDARY OR EXTRINSIC AMENTIA

Arrested mental development is often the consequence of injury after birth, whereas primary mental defectiveness is intrinsic, and arises from the germ plasm. A pregnant woman exposed to emotional shock or physical injury may give birth to a mentally feeble child. Semi-starved mothers cannot produce physically and mentally sound children. Injury may occur during birth, giving rise to mental defect in offspring, and some authorities rate this factor as rather high. Complicated parturition, and in a few cases the use of forceps, may contribute to deficiency of mind in the infant. In some cases there is very severe injury to the brain. But a hereditary taint in the parents usually exists.

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The agents of amentia after birth are traumatic, i.e., physical injuries, and poisons, epilepsy and under-nourishment. The effect of malnutrition is often seen in rickets, feeble-mindedness and cretinism.

### PHYSICAL STIGMATA OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY

The defective subject has certain aberrations or peculiarities of bodily structure. Unusual development of the bones is a common characteristic. There is often marked abnormality in the formation of the skull, and under-development of occipital region is commonly seen. In serious amentia cases abnormalities of the palate are present in a large proportion. There is also frequent malformation or abnormality of the jaw, and the teeth are generally ill-formed.

Many mental defectives seem to "throw back" to animal types, and retain a large amount of the bodily hair covering. Abnormal genital organs are fairly common among aments, the penis being often rudimentary and the testicles undescended. In females there are corresponding anomalies of the generative parts. Some women idiots do not menstruate.

Regarding the procreative capacity of the feeble-minded, it has been long noted that the high-grade type are remarkably prolific. This is a natural anomaly of very fatal import, as the case-histories of ament families show plainly.

## MENACE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

Lustful idiots, imbeciles, and the mentally deficient generally would breed an enormous number of totally unfit offspring if uncontrolled by law. The ament girls need protection against the class of base males who often take advantage of their weak-mindedness and seduce them. It is also a well-established fact that mentally defective females are a very high proportion of the *demi-monde* and of common street-walkers. These unfortunates are more likely to contract venereal diseases, and to spread them among the populace, than the sane prostitutes.

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MENTAL DEFECTIVE

The feeble-minded subject of the primary type shows infantile signs of his heritage. In 1928 the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children found that 1 per cent. of school children were mental incapables, who could not be placed in the idiot or imbecile class, but who were unable to benefit by ordinary methods of school teaching. Dr. Tredgold estimates the number of defective children as "0·73 per cent. of the children on the registers of public elementary schools." The approximate total number of these children was 50,665 in 1908.

The skulls of primary aments are frequently abnormal. The brain is inherently feeble or pathological, and cannot concentrate or reason normally. Deafness and defective sight are noted in a considerable number of cases. As a rule the feeble-minded

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child is notably unimaginative. He is emotionally weak, and he lacks humour. Such children can be educated in a certain elementary degree, and those in the highest grade may be dexterous in manual work, and can learn to write a letter and to add figures.

In the lowest grade of feeble-mindedness there is a close relationship to imbecility, and incapacity for learning anything but the very simplest letters and figures. "The backward child" is usually classed as normal, but intellectually dull. These children may be fairly capable of some kinds of work requiring little mental initiative. In most cases there is physical lesion or mal-development as a root cause of the dull-wittedness.

The true ament, of the feeble-minded or higher grade, is to be seen almost everywhere in town or country. In most villages there are one or two inhabitants who are variously described as "not all there," "button-short," "half-mazed," or "a bit dotty." These persons are often inoffensive, and employed in odd jobs, unskilled labour, errands, etc. There are others who are chronically work-shy, hardened loafers, and cadgers. Comparatively few of these types are to be seen in big towns, where the chances of earning any sort of a living are against them.

As workers the mental defectives are notorious muddlers, and unless it is an occupation of a purely mechanical kind they require constant supervision.

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They are mostly quite unoriginal. They are not able to manage their own affairs prudently. Hence many feeble-minded persons are a continual burden and tax upon relatives. Many drift into petty crime, show mischievous and malignant traits, follow the tramping life, and become inveterate beggars.

### THE MORON

This term has been given to the high-grade mental defectives, or those who may be called feeble-minded, possessing a certain aptitude for earning a partial or complete livelihood, and a moderate degree of intelligence. Morons have been described as among the happiest people in the civilized communities. It is the cheerfulness, or the placidity, born of a lack of social responsibility, a very feeble, or absent, moral sense, a want of imagination, deficiency of sympathy, and no ambition.

These "low-brows" abound in the West. Modern civilization appears to foster their production. They are in every class of society from the highest aristocracy to the submerged class in the worst slums of the cities.

A moron woman frequently wins a considerable share of this world's comforts, and even luxuries, through the possession of a pretty face and an air of childish disingenuousness. A fairly large number of moron girls marry, and it has been stated ironically that a truly intellectual, plain-featured woman has a

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poorer chance of matrimony than a cunning, good-looking, high-grade defective.

There are no intellectual, moral, religious, or deeply emotional problems for the moron. Unlike the psychoneurotic, who is generally a hypersensitive person, with ethical ideals and a tender conscience, the mental defective of the higher grade is partly or entirely without a sense of morality and an appreciation of the laws of the State and the codes of society. Morons are often attracted to queer pietistic sects, with crude or grotesque creeds and practices. There are two or three mental degenerates in most of these "gatherings."

### THE MORAL IMBECILE

A very large number of "normal" men and women have a very attenuated sense of right and wrong. They are deterred, to some extent, by fear of the law or by public opinion from committing serious offences, but they are shameless in the commission of minor frauds, social misdemeanours, and vices. The moral imbecile, or *amoral* individual, in the legal sense, is irresponsible in his behaviour. He has no ethical standard, no understanding of honesty and rectitude. Women of this type are innate pathological liars. Amoral subjects commit many gross sexual offences, and are often brought into the police courts on serious charges. The sentences passed upon them are often severe, the terms of imprison-

## MENACE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

ment long, and the cost to the nation enormous. The irresponsible criminal should not be punished, but sterilized, and segregated from the community.

An entire absence of ethical perception, or "moral insanity," may occur in persons who were once sane, but have lost the moral sense. The primary amoral ament has never possessed moral responsibility.

"In the case of sexual crimes," states Professor Iwan Bloch, "we must always have to do with individuals to whom more good could be done by medical influence than by imprisonment; we must entrust the physician with the duty of protecting society against such offenders. 'In this province, physicians will become the judges of the future,' says M. Hirschfeld most justly."<sup>1</sup>

The question of "diminished responsibility" is of enormous social importance. Much cruelty and injustice is inflicted upon morally irresponsible individuals, who should be regarded as invalids. A host of habitual criminals (recidivists) are moral defectives. They are in many cases the progenitors of offenders of an even worse type. Some live to an advanced age, and are constantly in the hands of the police.

Only the extremely marked cases of moral irresponsibility come under the care of the physician, or legal control. Moral degeneracy is largely the consequence of environment and of miseducation in the home and the school; but its root cause is mental

<sup>1</sup> "The Sexual Life of Our Time," p. 669.

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degeneration through heredity. Preaching morality or religion must fail inevitably in the case of the hereditary moral imbecile. The ill-born can, in some instances, be patched up, as it were, and slightly improved. But the only radical remedy for moral degeneracy is to forbid the breeding of degenerates. In the old days the criminal was killed. A more just and humane method of diminishing crime is to inhibit the production of mentally irresponsible criminal types.

"Failure in social adaptability is the only real criterion"<sup>1</sup> in mental defectiveness. The moral incapable is a burden on his generation and a problem for posterity. Through no fault of his own, he is a complete failure as a worthy member of a socialized community. Should such types be permitted to pass on their fatal degenerative characteristics?

### MATTOIDS

"The half-fool," or mattoid, is often a reformer, with a bizarre remedy for the ills of the community, or a would-be founder of a new fantastic religion. In "a mad world" it is hardly easy to define sanity. But the mattoid is a responsible person in the legal sense. Whether he is a menace or otherwise depends upon his social behaviour. He may be a militant anarchist, or a perfectly harmless mystic. Some

<sup>1</sup> "Report of Committee," 1929.

## MENACE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

humanitarians of the extravagant type are harmful, though their intention may be honest enough.

Max Nordau classed the mattoids as degenerates. An eccentric person is not necessarily a degenerate being. Divergent types of men and women have done much for morality, and a nation composed entirely of the stable-minded, the conventional, and the anti-progressive would soon decay and perish. Every new doctrine has been denounced as absurd since men began to think. But the "absurd" theory or hypothesis often becomes respected as an amazing scientific discovery.

Deviates and erratics may work good or evil wittingly or unwittingly, and precisely the same can be said for normal, ordinary, commonplace folk. As J. S. Mill announced, eccentricity of conduct should be encouraged. We are in many respects too powerfully dominated by the herd instinct, and too slavish in our conventions. Divergence from type may be healthy or unhealthy. We must discriminate between the genius of potential or actual worth and the empty megalomaniac, who is frequently a peril. A fluent half-wit is respected as a demi-god among a crowd of half-fools.

### EPILEPSY AND HEREDITY

Epilepsy in very young children leads often to severe or minor forms of amentia. The victims of this mysterious disease do not necessarily become

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insane or feeble-minded, but they may pass on a tendency to psychotic or neurotic disorder to their children. A considerable number of eminent men and women have been epileptics.

Epilepsy is inherited in the vast majority of cases. There is often a record of mental illness in the family stock; but apparently the first onset of the fits is sometimes associated with injury to the brain, and it is suspected by some modern abnormal psychological investigators that deep emotional conflicts may be a cause. The indications of an epileptic tendency are noted in early childhood in most instances; and occasionally the patient is in a high state of excitement before the outbreak of a fit. There is often a succession of fits, followed by depression or half stupor.

Epileptics often become insane, or demented, and the disease is then very intractable to any form of treatment. It has been found that the fits may cease when amentia has set in with definite signs. Convulsions in children is attributed to hereditary defect, and may develop into epilepsy.

## CRETINISM

This malady is associated with a defective or absent secretion of the thyroid gland. It produces mental decay in most instances, and there are marked physical stigmata, such as a huge skull, swollen lips and tongue, and bow legs. Cretinous subjects may

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be very low-grade idiots, deaf and dumb, and with hardly a glimmer of intelligence. In the higher grade, there are cretins capable of simple kinds of labour. In the endemic form of the disorder, goitre is present. Cretinism is traced to hereditary factors in a proportion of cases.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE HERITAGE OF MADNESS



## CHAPTER IV

### THE HERITAGE OF MADNESS

HEREDITY is the primary cause of insanity, other factors being contributory or accessory. Mental disorder may be inherited directly, or collaterally, and there is always a history of actual psychosis, epilepsy, pathological inebriety, syphilis, or nervous disease in the family stock. The contributing causes are many. The age of puberty, with its emotional stresses, may prove a fatal period when there is a bad heredity. The change of life in women is often associated with symptoms of insanity. Pregnancy is also a factor where the psychotic tendency exists.

All the common ills of life may induce insanity in certain cases where there is an inherited predisposition. Love troubles, money worries, grief, alcoholic excess, auto-intoxication, and uterine affections are secondary causes.

There are several forms of mental disease, ranging from simple mania to dementia præcox. The disorder may be recurrent or chronic. *Persons discharged from mental hospitals as cured may procreate insane or feeble-minded offspring.*

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

### THE MANIAC

Charles Lamb said that no man knows what happiness is until he has been mad. In mania there is often great exuberance and excitement, with exalted ideas and physical restlessness. An unusual degree of irritability, insomnia, and alternating depression are among the first signs of oncoming mania. The patient is not "shut in" like the melancholic, but voluble, active, and sometimes violent. The disorder may not be suspected by relatives until the symptoms become very marked, and the maniac may be able to conduct his affairs, and is possessed with extreme energy. Often there is heightened sexual libido, leading to extravagant love-making or promiscuous sex relations.

A considerable number of cases of simple mania improve under treatment, and recoveries are not uncommon. In severer forms, this type of insanity is marked by more serious symptoms. There may be a total loss of control, destructiveness, uncleanness, and suicidal impulses. In the manic-depressive form the disorder is recurrent, or there are lucid interludes between extreme depression and excitement.

The existence of latent insanity renders the individual dangerous to society, inasmuch as he may reproduce his tendency and blight his posterity. Heightened eroticism leads to reckless sex relations,

## THE HERITAGE OF MADNESS

and many insane, or half-insane, men and women are sexual perverts. Morbid sexuality has been associated with an epileptic heredity by Lombroso. Epileptics are found among the exhibitionists who are often in the police courts. This mania is allied to the morbid obsessional impulses, such as throwing paint or ink on women's clothes, cutting hair plaits, and kleptomania. The subjects are frequently quite sane apart from the compulsions, which are very difficult to subdue.

The manic-depressive form of this mental disease is common. The chief symptom is alternating exaltation and depression. Megalomaniacs and egomaniacs are often very optimistic, cheerful individuals who possess a delusion of greatness or of supreme virtue. Some egomaniacs believe that they are directly inspired by Heaven, and the psychoanalysts have studied the not uncommon "Jehovah complex," which is derived from a tremendous sense of self-importance, capability, or almighty ness.

There are a number of reputedly normal persons who suffer unconsciously from this complex. They are often in control of large business houses, or they become self-appointed guardians of public morals and leaders of eccentric religious sects.

There are many historic megalomaniacs, great military rulers, legislators, and artists. But they are not classed as insane.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

### MELANCHOLIA

This disease is of an emotional character, and is often accompanied by a deep feeling of guilt and unworthiness. Probably the primary cause of the profound depression is to be sought in the unconscious mind. The tendency to melancholy is inherited, and the secondary factors may be physical. There is an enfeeblement of the will, with mental confusion or stupor. Self-absorption is manifest, and there is a disregard for the feelings of relatives and friends. The patient complains of internal pains, and imagines that he has an intestinal growth or other serious symptoms.

The melancholic subject is apt to hear hallucinatory voices, and to see fantastic figures. There is often a suicidal impulse. The disorder is frequently recurrent, and patients who are discharged from mental institutions as cured often return after the lapse of years. The religious type of melancholic is usually the most difficult to treat in institutions.

Aments are prone to melancholic attacks and delusions or hallucinations, and some become incurably insane.

### DEMENTIA PRÆCOX

Primary dementia, schizophrenia, or dementia præcox is a disorder of the mind, apt to occur more often in youth and early adult life than at any other

## THE HERITAGE OF MADNESS

period. The disease has been very carefully studied by Kraepelin and other psychiatrists during the past fifty years. Many apparently bright and promising children develop dementia at or about the age of puberty.

There is generally a rapid degeneration of the mental faculties, though previously to the onset of definite manifestations, the patient may have been quite intelligent, and even talented.

Heredity from a defective stock is the prime cause of this serious psychic malady. Various causes excite or contribute, and there may be brain injury. The chief sign in dementia præcox is "negativism," a state of apathy, and a flight from the realities of life. Other signs are delusions of physical disorders, recurrent activity and idleness, and depression. These handicaps make the sufferer unfit to bear the burdens of life.

In severe forms, the disorder takes the form of stupor and complete helplessness. The patient may be unable to wash and dress himself, and is utterly regardless of bodily cleanliness. Demented persons are extremely obstinate and intractable in some instances. In katatonic dementia there is loss of control over the muscular system, and a completely confused mental state, which may lead to disgusting acts and violence.

The hope of recovery is small in the marked cases of dementia præcox. There is generally a tragic and steady decay of the mind. Physical factors are said

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by some alienists to be a predominant cause; but the new school of psychology attach considerable importance to mental, or psychogenetic, factors. It is even stated that mental analysis may be remedial in the early stages of the disorder. Very probably the defective action of the glandular system may be a primary cause of dementia præcox.

### DELUSIONAL INSANITY

Delusions exist in several forms of psychosis. They are marked symptoms in paranoia, or delusional insanity. The disease may not develop until some years after the attainment of maturity. There is in many, if not all, instances clear evidence of a hereditary taint. Depression is usually noted as a first sign, and this is followed by delusions of persecution. The sufferer is beset with human or supernatural forces of evil. He is neglected and persecuted by his family, or there is a conspiracy of organized public bodies against him.

There are often delusions of a neurotic or sexual character, especially among women. Cases of extreme exaltation are seen in persons who imagine that they are kings or great prophets. This disorder is very intractable, and true recoveries are rare.

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### PHYSICAL DEGENERATION IN INSANITY

Apart from the mental symptoms, which are the chief index of madness, there are numerous physical stigmata among the insane. There is often a poor vitality, which cannot resist great strain. The skull is frequently malformed, and there are abnormalities of the palate and teeth. Often there is copious hair-growth, and in other instances a scanty growth, and a lack of colouring matter. In paralytics, the germs of syphilis have been found in the brain. Epileptic subjects also show cerebral defects.

There is a shrinkage of the brain in dementia. Peculiarities of gait are commonly noted. There is said to be a specific odour in the skin secretions of some lunatics. Changes of a degenerative kind may be seen in almost any of the internal organs.



**CHAPTER V**  
**CRIMINAL INSANITY**



## CHAPTER V

### CRIMINAL INSANITY

A LARGE number of the criminal population are insane or mentally deficient. Habitual crime is associated with an inferior intelligence, a lack of social feeling, an amoral attitude to life, or complete irresponsibility. A considerable proportion of habitual criminals are actually insane, but are not certified as lunatics, and many are punished unjustly. Many more are half-insane or mentally feeble types, with a very meagre appreciation of social behaviour.

There are more male than female criminals. Women of the degenerate class resort to prostitution as a substitute for larceny or burglary. It cannot be asserted positively that an inclination to prostitution is a true sign of mental degeneration. There are economic factors that induce many women to ply the trade of courtesan, and many professional prostitutes can only be described as normal and sane.

Undoubtedly moral imbecility sends a considerable number of girls on the streets. Lombroso stated

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moral irresponsibility as the source of prostitution. On the other hand, an Italian inquirer, Tammeo, holds that the truly insane are rarely prostitutes. The case is different with the feeble-minded. The moron who joins the *demi-monde* is often mentally deficient, though attractive in appearance.

Havelock Ellis relates the experiences of Commenge in Paris, who, writing of girls with a feeble moral sense, states: "They attach no importance to their virginity; they are deflowered under the strongest conditions, without the least thought or care about the act they are accomplishing. No sentiment, no calculation, pushes them into a man's arms. They let themselves go without reflection and without motive, in an almost animal manner, from indifference and without pleasure."

Commenge found "forty-five girls between the ages of twelve and seventeen who were deflowered by chance strangers whom they never met again." One girl of fourteen sold herself for a glass of beer<sup>1</sup> and another for a ride on a roundabout. These irresponsibles are exposed to great risks of pregnancy, and of contracting venereal diseases; but they give no thought to the danger that they run.

Degeneracy of mind is notable in a high proportion of prostitutes. Physical abnormalities have also been noted as fairly common in America, Germany, and Italy. Dr. J. G. Kiernan and other investigators have found, among American prostitutes, a number

<sup>1</sup> "Sex in Relation to Society," pp. 275, 276.

## CRIMINAL INSANITY

of marked degenerates, and a proportion of insane women.

Hübner, in Germany, found that among sixty-four insane prostitutes in a Berlin asylum 54·45 were mentally defective when they adopted the trade.

Lack of moral responsibility and diminished responsibility are the source of many criminal acts, which are punished by law. Many sexual offences are committed by irresponsible, or semi-irresponsible, persons, notably hair-fetichists and exhibitionists. In cases of obsessional indecent exposure, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness and alcoholism are common causes. Confusional states may lead apparently sane individuals to commit acts against public decency.

## THE CRIMINAL TYPE

Lombroso held the view that crime is the result of congenital mental deficiency, and that the born criminal, the habitual offender, has specific physical stigmata of degeneration. Not all delinquents can be classed as degenerates; a large number of occasional law-breakers are entirely sane and responsible. The habitual criminal, the recidivist, or "old lag," is generally an abnormal type, with a strong bias to crime in one form or another.

The cost of the habitual criminal to the nation is enormous. There are many who spend most of their lives in gaol or penal servitude. When released, they are free to perpetuate their undesirable type. In

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Indiana "confirmed criminals and rapists" can be sterilized at the discretion of the authorities. In Washington the statute applies to habitual criminals, and to persons "adjudged guilty of carnal abuse of a female person under ten years of age."

Two, three, or more convictions is a cause for sterilization in some of the States. In California "any recidivist lawfully confined in a State prison" is liable to the asexualization act. If the inmates of Connecticut gaols are deemed unfit to procreate law-abiding children, they may be sterilized. For procreation, one offence in Iowa renders the operation compulsory. Criminals of the habitual class are liable to sterilization in Kansas, Oregon, South Dakota, and New Jersey.<sup>1</sup>

"Mere conviction of crime is insufficient to justify society in taking this drastic means of protecting itself against the criminal," states the *Harvard Law Review*. "Asexualization can only be justified in the case of born criminals, and unfortunately in the present state of scientific knowledge it seems impossible to distinguish most born criminals from criminals by acquired habit."<sup>2</sup>

It is pointed out in America, in reply to opponents of sterilization, that the law hangs a murderer and

<sup>1</sup> A full account of the sterilization of the insane, feeble-minded and confirmed criminal will be found in "Eugenical Sterilization in the United States," by Harry H. Laughlin, D.Sc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## CRIMINAL INSANITY

imprisons some offenders for life. This is a necessary "interference with the liberty of the subject."

Sterilization of incorrigible criminals is not nearly so severe a penalty as lifelong imprisonment or hanging. It may, and often does, improve the health of the criminal.

Every provision is made against unjustifiable sterilization in the United States. The directors of prisons and hospitals appoint two skilled surgeons for each institution, and these, in conjunction with the physician or surgeon of the hospital or gaol, form a board, and have the power of deciding whether procreation is inadvisable in the case of certain detained persons. If the operations of vasectomy in male cases, and oophorectomy in the female, are considered essential, they are carried out with skill, safety, and in a humane manner.

### TYPICAL CASES

A man described as "a moral pervert" was charged with rape, and sentenced to imprisonment in the Oregon State Penitentiary. His age was sixty-four, and his occupation farmer and preacher. He was married and had two children, and had been divorced. The delinquent travelled the country preaching a gospel, which he called "The Crooked Way Made Straight." His own daughter by the first wife was sent from home, through "depraved acts" at an early age practised by the father. This man

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adopted a little girl, and seduced her at the age of twelve. A sterilization order was made against the culprit, on the grounds that he was "a feeble-minded, insane, epileptic, habitual criminal, moral degenerate or sexual pervert, to wit: a Sexual Pervert—who is a person potential to producing offspring who, because of inheritance of inferior or anti-social traits, would probably become a social menace, or a ward of the State."

A girl, the daughter of a mentally defective father, in New Jersey, permitted intercourse with a negro, met casually. The mother was an epileptic, and numbers of her family were mentally deficient and alcoholic. This feeble-minded girl was hypersexual, and if released from an institution, was likely to bear degenerate offspring. The family history of this defective was examined thoroughly through several generations, and it was found to be bad on both sides.

There are a number of such girls in all the civilized communities, and the risk of reproducing their disastrous traits are appalling. The same may be said for the type of male offender in the first of these two cases.<sup>1</sup> Is society justified in permitting such degenerate beings to propagate the species?

<sup>1</sup> For full account see "Case and Family Histories," in "Eugenical Sterilization in the United States."

**CHAPTER VI**  
**REPRODUCTIVE PHYSIOLOGY**



## CHAPTER VI

### REPRODUCTIVE PHYSIOLOGY

GENERAL physiology is one of the least studied subjects among the great mass of the population, and sexual physiology is almost entirely neglected, even among educated parents. For this reason it is necessary to describe briefly the rudiments of the immensely important science of reproduction in the human species, before proceeding to explain the various methods of asexualization, or sterilization, which are practised, or suggested as practicable.

The process of reproduction in mankind is intricate and wonderful. Very much remains to be discovered in relation to the physiology and psychology of sex; but many important discoveries have been made during the past fifty years, and knowledge is accumulating through the earnest labour of scientific inquirers in this great branch of biology. For the eugenical reformer, a knowledge of the physiology of reproduction is a first essential. Most of our ideas upon the sex relationship, social, moral, and legislative, have been derived from the scantiest possible

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

knowledge of sexual physiology and psychology. Probably in no other subject of deep human interest is there so much misconception, ignorance, and error as in sexual affairs.

### ASEXUAL AND SEXUAL REPRODUCTION

The oldest form of reproduction of a species is generally considered to be a budding or fission of an organism. There are worms in which this is the only method of increase. In several plants and lower animals there is periodic budding as a means of reproduction.

In the vegetable kingdom there are in most trees and plants two distinct sexes, each producing the requisite male and female germs of reproduction. As we ascend in the scale of animal evolution, the differences in the two sexes become more marked, and the process of generation more elaborate and complicated. In the higher mammalia, or breast-fed animals, psychic or emotional factors enter into courting, pairing, and the rearing of offspring. In mankind the sexual instinct is enormously supplemented by mental influences, imagination, and numerous stimuli.

Human beings are the product of the male sperm cell and the female ovum. The reproductive cells in male animals were first observed in 1677. Little of a scientific character was known by physiologists concerning reproduction before the discovery of the

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method of conjugation of the male and female life germs. Semen is the fluid in which the male generative cells live and move. The ovum of the female cannot be fertilized without penetration by a spermatozoon from the male testicles.

Copulation, coitus, or sexual intercourse is the generative act of the mammals; and in the female the desire for conjugation and the capacity for breeding are dependent chiefly upon a periodic maturation of the ovum. The preparation for Nature's main purpose, Reproduction of the Species, begins at an early stage of foetal development in the human womb, and is continued until puberty, and later.

The sexual mode of propagation is a great step in advance of the asexual. In the human species it is the basis of the love of the sexes, and the source of the profoundest desires and emotions. It is also the determinant of æsthetic beauty and the attraction that play so large a part in human life. It may be said the higher the type, the higher and more diffused the sexuality. The dominance of the erotic instinct brings forth the highest virtues of humanity, and it may also be truly said, some of the gravest errors and tragedies.

### SEXUAL PERIODICITY

At the pubertal period, the body of both sexes undergoes several changes of a highly important nature. The development is more notable in the

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female sex, for the function of menstruation begins, and there are changes in the bodily chemistry, or metabolism. Woman is the dominant agent in reproduction; man is the fertilizer of the ovum that will become the embryo, and develop into the foetus and the infant.

The menstrual cycle in women is marked by stages. In the first stage there is swelling of the tissue of the uterus, followed by congestion and internal bleeding, arising from the surface epithelium. With the serous fluid discharged by the vagina, or external opening, there is water, albumen, and various salts. Menstruation occurs on the average once in twenty-eight days in the human female.

The process is a preparation for conception through the fertilization of a ripened ovum lodged in the Fallopian tubes or the womb. In the human being, as in all mammals, there is a condition known as oestrus, or the period of sexual desire, which begins in puberty. The common names for this state in animals are heat or rut.

In the male sex periodicity is less marked, but there is often periodic enhanced erotic excitement and desire.

Ovulation in the female is the formation of ovules or ova, in the ovaries on either side of the uterus; and in the human race, during the puerperal life, in normal instances, a fully developed ovum awaits impregnation once a month.

In the animals below man oestrus is well marked.

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Dogs are usually "in heat" once in six months. The males of many of the carnivora may be said to be constantly in a condition for pairing with the female. Some of the higher animals menstruate once a year, and a few only at longer intervals.

### OVULATION

The ova of woman are present in an immature state at birth, and in large numbers. There are fewer at the age of puberty, and these are normally capable of impregnation if they come in contact with the male spermatozoon. The ovum is contained in the Graafian follicle, which comes near the surface of the ovary when mature. The follicles are finally ruptured, and form the corpus luteum, and the ovum is either fertilized by the male sperm, or left unimpregnated and subject to dissolution.

Ovulation in women is often accelerated by sexual intercourse. When the ovum is fully ripe, it is drawn up by the fimbriated ends of the Fallopian tube, and finds its way to the uterus.

The ovary has a massive influence upon the body and mind of women. The secretion from the interstitial glands is a highly important factor of health and has powerful psychic influence. It is probable that this secretion, or hormone, is the stimulus of heat, or sexual desire, in the females of all the mammalia.

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### THE SEMINAL FLUID

The fluid that contains the male generative cells, or sperms, is stored in the testicles, two oval-shaped organs, enclosed in the scrotum, or bag. Normally, semen is first secreted at puberty, and its production is sometimes continued until senility. The vital germ, the spermatozoon, is microscopic, a single cell, with a head, a nucleus, and a long tail.

A vast number of spermatozoa are produced during adolescence and adult life. There may be 200,000,000 in a single ejaculation. The sperms are remarkably motile, and are urged along the minute tubes of the testicles by the whip-like tail. When discharged during copulation, the spermatozoa reach the uterus or Fallopian tubes of the female, and one sperm only pierces and fertilizes a mature ovum.

The semen of man is composed of secretions from the seminal vessels, the testicles, the prostate gland, and Littré's glands. Motility of the spermatozoon is aided by the fluid produced in the prostate.

### THE MALE GENERATIVE ORGANS

The external organs of generation in the male are the testicles and the penis. The latter is the intermittent organ, which conveys the sperm to the ovum during the act of sexual intercourse. The penis

## REPRODUCTIVE PHYSIOLOGY

serves as a duct for the expulsion of urine from the bladder, and is also an important part of the apparatus in coitus or copulation.

The penis is provided with erectile tissue, and when engorged with an extra supply of blood, stimulated by erotic erethism, or excitement, it can penetrate the female vagina. The organ is highly vascular, and supplied with numerous nerves and muscles. Ejaculation of the seminal fluid occurs during sexual intercourse, and the sperms are drawn up into the os uteri, or mouth of the womb, by peristaltic action.

The testicles, or testes, have already been briefly described. They contain the generative cells in the coils of the tubules, and also an important fluid from the cells of Leydig, or interstitial glands. The secretion from the interstitial cells produces the hormone, or stimulant, that causes desire for copulation in the mammals, and does not contain generative cells. Its secreting action is stimulated by the vasectomy operation, which will be described in other pages, and in authenticated cases of "rejuvenation," the effect is often marked.<sup>1</sup>

There is an intimate association of the organs of generation with the endocrine, or ductless, glands in other parts of the human body. The thymus gland, which atrophies in normal cases in the pre-pubertal period, has a function in the development of the testicles. The thyroid is closely connected with the

<sup>1</sup> Cases are recorded in "Rejuvenation," by Dr. Norman Haire.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

sex organs. It is aroused to heightened action by sexual intercourse, and removal of the gland in women may cause atrophy of the internal generative organs.

The suprarenal capsule also influences the generative system to a certain extent. The pituitary gland affects body growth and sexual development. Castration results in certain changes in the functioning of the ductless glands.

### THE FEMALE GENERATIVE ORGANS

The vagina is the sheath between the neck of the uterus and the external labia, or lips. The orifice has a double pair of labia, the majora and the minora, and the latter direct the flow of urine from the urethra. In the virgin female, the vagina is partly closed by the hymen, a thin membrane, which is usually ruptured during the first act of intercourse. Like the male organ of generation, the vagina is capable of tumescence, or thickening, under emotional influence, causing a flow of blood to the tissue. The clitoris is a small organ resembling the penis, and it is situated above the entrance to the vaginal passage. There are secreting mucous, lubricating and other glands in the vagina, which serve a purpose in coitus. The cervix, or neck of the uterus, opens into the vagina.

The ovaries are internal organs producing the ova, or female germs, connected with the womb by tubes. There is a secretion from the ovaries which has

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powerful effects upon the bodily chemistry and the mind. Removal of the ovaries, spaying or castration in female animals, influences the metabolism considerably, as in the case of male castration. The interstitial secretion may be increased by severing the tube that conveys the ova to the uterus. For therapeutic and hygienic reasons, this operation is sometimes performed; and it is the chief of the customary means of sterilization in America.

Ovarian extract has been used fairly extensively in the treatment of female diseases, and it is claimed that the results are often remarkable. In women, as in men, there is a functional relationship between the endocrine organs and the generative system. The thyroid gland swells at the menstrual period, and becomes larger at puberty. The secretion from the pituitary body plays a part in the production of milk from the mammary glands. In extract, from the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland, used in midwifery cases and in experiments on animals, it has been proved to stimulate the generative system.

## IMPREGNATION AND GESTATION

Insemination, the first stage of impregnation of the ovum of woman by the male spermatozoon, occurs after copulation, when an active sperm cell comes into contact with a ripened ovum. The spermatozoa may remain vital for some days. Cases have been

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

recorded in which sperms remained in the vagina for a week and over three weeks.

In the human species there is a constant production of spermatozoa in healthy males from the age of puberty, and a fertile man can procreate at any time. Conception is the result of the fertilization of the ovum, and when it occurs, menstruation in the woman usually ceases entirely until after the birth of the infant.

The blood of the mother produces through the placenta the nutriment for the embryo in the uterus. The embryo is protected by the amniotic fluid, and develops into the foetus during the period of gestation. Various metabolic changes occur in the pregnant woman.

The act of giving birth, delivery or parturition, is accompanied by pain. The infant is expelled by powerful contractions of the uterus and the abdominal muscles. The child-bearing period in a woman's life is about thirty years.

CHAPTER VII  
FATEFUL HEREDITY



## CHAPTER VII

### FATEFUL HEREDITY

IT has been said that “ no man can escape the tyranny of his organization.” We all come into life with good and bad traits inherited from our ancestors and progenitors, and our inheritance can merely be modified, and not changed entirely. There has been a long controversy on the corrective effect of Nurture upon Nature, and it has been claimed that environment, education, and various social and ethical or religious influences can alter character. Only in a limited degree can training influence a man’s inherent traits. The tendencies in the germ-plasm remain to the end.

As heredity is the main factor in idiocy, imbecility, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, and various forms of insanity, the study of genetics is essential in the training of the eugenic reformer. In the United States, in 1922, there were one hundred and fifty trained investigators of the pedigree facts of numerous families.

“ Their business consists in starting with a given individual, called the propositus; then, after securing a thorough case-history of this particular individual, and securing records of medical examination,

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

psychaistical and anthropological tests, the worker goes to the home territory of the propositus. There, from first-hand evidence, the family connections of the individual are established, and then, in order to present the family relations to the analyst, clearly and conveniently, a family tree is plotted in pedigree or genealogical fashion.

"The field-worker next proceeds to secure case-histories and biographical records of the various members of the family tree, with particular emphasis upon those persons closest in blood and kin to the propositus, and upon those traits which are being diagnosed genetically in the propositus."<sup>1</sup>

The accumulation of case-histories of the insane, the mentally defective and the habitually criminal, is of the highest value to the sociologist, eugenist, and legislator. If a country wishes to rear socially valuable individuals, as much attention to the facts of genetics is at least as necessary as the care exercised in the breeding of superior livestock. Unfortunately, no such investigation has been State-supported in Great Britain until recently.

The alarm now shown by an increasing number of responsible citizens in the United Kingdom lest the unfit may soon vastly outnumber the fit, is almost of the nature of panic. We find, in all parts of England, Wales, and Scotland, an official demand for practical and immediate measures for dealing with one of the gravest of our national problems.

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Laughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

## FATEFUL HEREDITY

### GOOD HUMAN STOCK

It is well known that some families "breed true" and produce useful members of the community, while in other families the record is bad. The family name may be a synonym for ineffectiveness, weak-mindedness, alcoholism, or criminality. The fatal tendency to recessive traits in a family line has been closely studied. There are children of whom it may be said that they are doomed to act anti-socially as adults, or to develop signs of amentia or insanity. A dominant character trait is generally shown by a fairly large number of the members of a given family. Mutations or changes in the germ-plasm, often baffle the genetic inquirer. Nevertheless, the signs of degeneration are recognizable by the expert investigator before the actual appearance of amentia subjects or criminal offenders in a human stock. Desirable and undesirable hereditary qualities are mixed in most men and women, and it is hardly possible to eliminate the bad and preserve only the good. We can only say that, when the bad tendencies preponderate largely over the good, it is undesirable to breed from a specific individual.

With increasing knowledge of hereditary influences, it is unlikely that the nations of the West will endure much longer the degenerative practice of utterly irresponsible human breeding. "Genetic knowledge," writes Bateson, "must certainly lead to new conceptions of justice, and it is by no means

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

impossible that, in the light of such knowledge, public opinion will welcome measures likely to do more for the extinction of the criminal and the degenerate than has been accomplished by ages of penal enactment.”<sup>1</sup> In the *Alienist and Neurologist*, 1908, a writer states: “There are circumstances under which the propagation of a human life may be as gravely criminal as the taking of a life already begun.”<sup>2</sup>

Family histories of many criminals, lunatics, and of offenders judged as sane, would show degeneracy in the ancestors, near or remote. The question of responsibility in mental disease is very difficult. Unquestionably, a considerable number of habitual offenders, costing the public an immense annual expenditure for penal detention, should be under perpetual restraint, and prevented from procreating their types.

As a matter of fact, the law-abiding citizen is penalized for the support of his amoral, vicious, or criminal neighbour. Ever-increasing taxation is the inevitable outcome of our disastrous disregard of the inexorable principle of heredity. It is only by blind chance that the physically sound and the mentally capable are produced in the civilized states of the West. We continue to breed as the hairy, semi-human primitives bred in the earliest stage of man’s evolution; and we reap the terrible result in disease of mind and body, crime, and suffering.

<sup>1</sup> Mendel’s “Principles of Heredity,” 1909.

<sup>2</sup> Article on “Restricted Procreation,” C. H. Hughes.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **VOLUNTARY AND FORCIBLE STERILIZATION**



## CHAPTER VIII

### VOLUNTARY AND FORCIBLE STERILIZATION

A VERY considerable number of entirely responsible persons of either sex have been voluntarily sterilized during the past few years. The vasectomy operation, as performed upon individuals suffering from premature ageing, chronic fatigue symptoms, inefficiency in work, and other disabilities, has been highly successful in a number of recorded cases.

The effect of severing the vas deferens in men, and the ovarian tube in women, is in most instances mentally and physically beneficial. It is only beginning to be recognized that the chemistry of the body (metabolism) is, in both sexes, influenced enormously by the secretions from the glands of the internal generative organs. The ancient saying : "The seed is the life" is true, in the sense that the race cannot continue without the merging of the male germ with the female ovum. But the gonads, or germ-plasm, have their single and specific purpose. They either perish after secretion or are employed in the reproductive process. They are not the purely somatic secretions, and they can be expelled from the body of both sexes.

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The fluid from the interstitial glands of the testicles is not a fertilizing agent, but is the hormone that incites to pairing in the human species, and is absolutely requisite for developing the secondary sex characters and the sound health of the whole system.

In 1899, "Dr. C. H. Sharp, surgeon of the Reformatory at Jeffersonville, Indiana, appears to have been the first to use vasectomy eugenically on any scale."<sup>1</sup>

The secretion from the interstitial tubules has its influences upon the other ductless, or endocrine, glands of the body of mammals. Hence entire removal of the testes causes arrested development in the thyroid and increase in the pituitary. Eunuchs tend to become fat, and if castrated before puberty there is interference with the pituitary secretion, which is most probably the cause of elongation of the bones of the limbs.

There is quite sufficient evidence to prove that the interstitial glands secrete a fluid that plays a very important part in metabolism. Ligation of the vas deferens, though rendering the subject sterile, does not interfere with the production of the testicular hormone; on the contrary, there is proof that the secretion is heightened, with marked signs of improvement of health, a reaccess of vigour, and frequently a renewal of sexual potency.

This rejuvenating influence is well illustrated when a whole testicle, or part, is transplanted into the

<sup>1</sup> "Eugenical Sterilization in U.S.A." p. 410.

## FORCIBLE STERILIZATION

body of a previously castrated male animal. Numerous highly interesting cases are given in volumes on the endocrine organs. When the production of semen is inhibited by the operation of vasectomy, there is an increased activity of the interstitial cells. It is this fact that induces many persons in the Western nations to undergo a simple treatment that will bring about a restoration of mental and bodily capacity, though it involves a loss of generative power. The operation abolishes the production of germ cells.

Voluntary sterilization in sane women is less frequent than in men. The removal of the ovaries has not as marked an effect as castration in men. The operation of spaying, or oophorectomy, in women, at an early age, causes a reduction in the size of the uterus, and a cessation of the menstrual function. Castrated women may develop masculine physical signs, and are inclined to corpulence.

The special gland of the ovaries, affecting secondary sex characters and metabolism, certainly appears to be stimulated to increased secretion by salpingectomy, or the excision of a small part of both oviducts or Fallopian tubes. The testimony of surgeons as to the benefits to health that follow this operation in women seems to point to permanent and positive results in some cases.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of complete removal of the ovaries upon the sex appetite may be to diminish or to

<sup>1</sup> "Rejuvenation," Dr. Norman Haire.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

enhance desire and gratification. Upon this question there is much evidence that seems conflicting. Kisch notes this difference of view among inquirers, in "The Sexual Life of Women." Lawson Tait and other gynecologists state that removal of part or even the whole of the internal organs of generation in women does not cause a loss of desire or satisfaction in sexual intercourse.

### VOLUNTARY STERILIZATION OF AMENTS

A proportion of high-grade feeble-minded persons are sufficiently intelligent to consent to the operation of vasectomy. They are carefully enlightened concerning the nature of the operation, its safety, and its potentiality for improving the state of health. In many instances, relatives of mental defectives, in America, advise the treatment in the interest of the afflicted person.

An elderly man convicted of offences against little girls in Chicago, was offered the choice of submitting to sterilization or being sent to prison. Judge Marcus Kavanaugh, who heard the case, said to the delinquent: "If you will submit to an operation, with the choice of the best surgeons, by next Saturday, I will set aside your sentence. I cannot compel you to submit, and you will have a week to think the matter over. If you decide to do this it will mean that you do not have to begin your sentence of from one to twenty years in the penitentiary."

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The prisoner consented to be sterilized. In commenting on the case, the judge said: "I believe all morons, the criminal insane, and habitual criminals, both men and women, should be so treated." A year after the operation, the convicted man had changed for the better. Had he been imprisoned and released, there is the strong probability that he would have repeated his misconduct.

In England voluntary sterilization of criminals has been offered in at least one case as an alternative to imprisonment. A mentally defective youth was given the option by a magistrate, but his mother refused consent. There is little doubt that if the harmless, and even beneficial, results of vasectomy were clearly understood, a number of unfit men and women would undergo the operation voluntarily. It is essential that the public should understand that sterilization does not mean the same thing as castration, i.e., entire removal of testicles or ovaries, but the severing of a duct, and that the operation does not interfere with capacity for sexual intercourse.

## COMPULSORY STERILIZATION

There are numerous cases of amentia, insanity, and habitual criminality, in which the only possible protection of society and posterity is by enforced sterilization. Some of the legal advocates of asexualization in the United States have stated that the major operation of castration, or even complete

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removal of the external sex organs, should be the penalty for rape and outrages on children.

The majority of eugenical reformers are in favour of the less drastic operation of vasectomy in the case of the hopelessly feeble-minded. Dr. R. Reid Rentoul, one of the careful investigators of eugenical problems in England, points out that no surgeon is empowered by law to perform any surgical operation upon any person. Sir J. F. Stephen stated that: "Every person has the right to consent to a surgical operation upon himself, or upon his child; that if the person is incapable of giving consent to a surgical operation, it is not a crime to operate without consent."<sup>1</sup>

In the rejuvenation operation, as performed frequently by surgeons at the request of sane patients, there is no question of illegality. It has been suggested that no person should perform the sterilization operation for any reason without having gained the consent of the Lunacy Commissioners. No surgeon should operate unless appointed by the Commissioners, and any breach of this rule should be a punishable offence.

For the protection of future generations and the community of to-day, forcible sterilization is as fully justifiable as the execution of murderers, the imprisonment of criminal offenders, the detention of the insane, or any necessary method of protecting citizens of the State, approved by public opinion.

<sup>1</sup> "Race Culture or Race Suicide," 1906.

## FORCIBLE STERILIZATION

The first Statute of Washington, in 1909, declared that compulsory sterilization was indicated in the case of inveterate criminals and persons guilty of carnal abuse of female persons under ten years of age, or of rape. The operation permitted was "an operation for the prevention of procreation." In the second Statute, the sterilization treatment was recommended and approved for the feeble-minded, insane, epileptic, habitual criminals, moral degenerates and sexual perverts, in institutions, showing hereditary degeneracy.

The motive of the State for the enactment was "primarily eugenic and secondarily for the personal benefit of the inmate." The decision as to the kind of operation is in the discretion of the Institutional Board of Health, "to be performed with due regard for the physical condition of the inmate, and in a safe and humane manner."



**CHAPTER IX**  
**OBJECTIONS TO STERILIZATION**



## CHAPTER IX

### OBJECTIONS TO STERILIZATION

MOST of the opponents of legal sterilization of the unfit assert that the measure is a flagrant interference with the liberty of the subject. To what extent is "liberty" justifiable for the community and the individual? This question has perplexed rulers and law-makers for many centuries. No state has permitted a freedom that militates against the common welfare. Even in the countries boasting of liberty, there are enactments that, in the opinion of many citizens, curtail reasonable freedom of action, and lead to evil.

In a certain degree, a government is compelled to frame laws that are a menace to sane liberty in speech and conduct. There is everywhere a limit to free speech, and often an attempt to suppress free thought is imposed by legislation. In America a person may not drink spirituous liquors under a penalty. He is practically prohibited from investigating important social and hygienic questions, through the action of the law that makes the sale of a work on sex-psychology or birth control an indictable offence.

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In England recently we have experienced a typical interference with public liberty, in the case of those government officials who are permitted to decide what books should be read by their compatriots. The ancient religious association of knowledge with sin is manifest in all the Western civilizations. And many ardent advocates of sternly suppressive measures for combating crime, immorality, obscenity, and alcoholic intemperance are hostile to a method of attacking the evils at their source.

### THE HUMANITARIAN OBJECTION

Fellow-feeling, sympathy and pity are excellent and indispensable social virtues, and it is on the grounds of sympathy with the weak that some persons denounce the eugenic measure for diminishing amentia, insanity, and habitual criminality. They would refrain from depriving an imbecile or a highly dangerous criminal of the power of procreation on the plea of humanity. It is not "humane," they argue, to "mutilate" a human being, even though his or her offences, and lack of moral responsibility, are proved clearly to be the result of a hereditary taint, which can be handed on from generation to generation.

Better that the ament should be granted freedom of action in the sex relationship than that he should be made a victim of an arbitrary act, and lose his liberty as a member of a free community. Such, in effect, is the contention of those vehement critics of steriliza-

## OBJECTIONS TO STERILIZATION

tion who fail to recognize that permitting the unfit to increase and multiply is more cruel and destructive of social liberty than the enforcement of a surgical operation on a comparatively small number of degenerates.

Sympathy is at the basis of eugenical sterilization. The eugenist realizes that the prevention of an appalling increase of the feeble-minded and the hereditary criminal is only possible by the means that he proposes. Is it not far more humane to debar the unfit man or woman from procreating degenerates, born to a heritage of suffering and disability, than to permit him or her to enjoy a fatal "liberty."

In a considerable number of instances mental defectives and criminals consent willingly to sterilization. They experience no dread of the operation when it is explained to them. That many of the subjects who have undergone the operation are in better health afterwards is unquestionable. Responsible valetudinarians pay considerable fees for a precisely similar operation, with the expectation of a renewal of vitality.

Vasectomy, as we have seen, does not impair the general health, but tends to improve it. It does not destroy the emotional attitude to the opposite sex, nor preclude sexual relations. The only way in which the operation affects liberty is that the subject cannot injure society by producing offspring doomed to misery, and capable of passing on their degeneracy in more severe forms.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

### Is SEGREGATION A REMEDY?

Opponents of sterilizing methods suggest that complete segregation of the unfit is more humane than an operation, and that it would prevent the increase of amentia and crime by the separation of the sexes in colonies or institutions. An ament might be certified as irresponsible in childhood, and segregated for the whole of life, with only the minimum of risk of the production of illegitimate offspring. In such cases the cost to the State would be enormous. Another proposed alternative is confinement in a custodial institution during the whole of the reproductive period in man and woman. This involves "the loss of liberty" which is so deplored by those who would allow freedom full rein.

There are two motives in segregation: the protection of the community, and the protection of the individual. Segregation and sterilization are not punishments. They are human measures in the interest of those afflicted by congenital mental incapacity, of their relatives, the State, posterity and the race.

It would be impossible to segregate effectively the vast multitude of aments and constant criminals in the civilized nations. Even under the closest supervision there must always be a very large number of the socially inadequate to propagate their kind. The cases of latent insanity are numerous, the actually

## OBJECTIONS TO STERILIZATION

insane are often at liberty, and the mentally deficient of the higher grade who are not certified, abound everywhere in the Western world. These are actual and potential parents of ill-fated children.

Sterilization is not a complete substitution for segregation because a very considerable number of aments are not fit to be at large. The morons who are fairly capable of taking care of themselves and doing some kind of work can, in some instances, be permitted freedom. But they must not be able to procreate.

"Sterilization and segregation are both working for social amelioration," states Dr. H. H. Laughlin's careful survey of the whole question. "Segregation takes the immediate problem, and should have unbounded support. Sterilization is a long-term investment and looks towards reducing the necessity in future generations of custodial care and treatment."

According to the court decisions in America, degenerates in or out of custodial institutions are subject to sterilization. It would be folly to allow mental defectives of most grades the full liberty of responsible persons. On the other hand, tolerably capable aments could, if sterilized, obtain occupation which would at least partly support them. Neither segregation nor sterilization alone is at present sufficient for the elimination of mental deficiency. There is, however, reason to believe that the evil may be banished after a few years of sterilization.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

### THE MORAL OBJECTION

It has been objected that the sterilization operation, though it deprives mental defectives from the power of procreation, does not inhibit the exercise of the sexual instinct, and is therefore likely to cause increased sexual irregularity in persons of congenital libidinous propensity. Whether we sterilize the ament or not, he or she is almost certain to gratify sex desire, either in marriage or illicitly. Deprivation of the ability to reproduce would prevent the enormous number of illegitimate births among mental defectives, and is, in fact, the only safeguard against this menace to public well-being.

It cannot be proved that vasectomy in men, and the severing of the ovarian tube in women, would result in an increase of sexual promiscuity. Even if sexual irregularity results, the harm as a consequence to the State and to the race is not nearly so perilous as the uncontrolled reproduction of a host of the unfit, the greater number of whom would become charges upon the public purse, and a source of disease, crime, and pauperism.

The moral objection can scarcely be urged by those who reflect seriously upon the evils resulting from the present immoral and demoralizing laxity of authority, which allows two irresponsible half-wits or semi-insane persons to produce as many children as they choose. Aments are sufficiently intelligent

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to apprehend that the State will not allow their illegitimate and degenerate offspring to starve.

It may even be said that, under a system which fails to prevent the reproduction of diseased illegitimate children, illicit intercourse is facilitated.



**CHAPTER X**  
**BIRTH CONTROL AS A REMEDY**



## CHAPTER X

### BIRTH CONTROL AS A REMEDY

ONLY a few of the critics of legal sterilization have recommended the practice of contraception as a probable remedy for diminishing the number of the mentally unfit. The proposal is manifestly futile when we recognize that a vast mass of the physically and mentally degenerate in the civilized countries, who are not legally certifiable as irresponsible, are breeding at the present time at an alarming rate. If the normal slum dweller of inferior stock refuses to control the procreative function, how can we hope that the abnormal degenerates will practise birth control?

Knowledge of the methods of preventing conception is now available among the upper class, the educated middle class, and the intelligent artisans. But practical information is only reaching the lower strata of society very slowly. Only those who have taken an active part in the movement for restriction of the population are able to appreciate the extent of the prevailing ignorance of contraception among the poorer classes.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

A propaganda advocating birth control among mental defectives would not have the least effect upon the number of licit and illicit births. Even normal persons of strong passions frequently ignore any precautions whatever in sex relations. Can it be expected that the mindless degenerate could ever be taught to regard the gratification of the sex impulse as a matter of grave importance to society? Is he even capable of considering the matter from a personal point of view?

So long as legislation in England refuses to permit doctors at the Welfare Centres to instruct working-class women in safe methods of birth control, and America penalizes such teaching, it is ludicrous to suggest contraception as a check upon the procreation of the ament class. In the United States birth control advocacy and instruction is ranked legally with criminal abortion and obscenity.<sup>1</sup> In England there is a strong anti-birth control opposition among orthodox Roman Catholics.

Contraception has undoubtedly potentiality for eugenic as opposed to dysgenic human breeding. There are responsible married persons who realize that, while marriage may be permissible, the exercise of the generative power by persons with fatal hereditary tendencies is an offence against humanity. But such responsibility respecting society and the race is unfortunately very rare, even among the

<sup>1</sup> "Criminal Statutes on Birth Control," *Journal of Crim. Law*, May, 1919.

## BIRTH CONTROL AS A REMEDY

reputedly moral and educated classes in the Western nations.

It is not only the certifiable feeble-minded, the insane, and the criminal degenerate who disregard all questions of eugenics and duty to the community when swayed by passion.

The congenital amoral individual of weak intellect is entirely incapable of understanding the first principles of eugenics. Aments have no thought for the morrow of the community, no social sense, and no comprehension of individual responsibility in parentage.



**CHAPTER XI**  
**METHODS OF STERILIZATION**



## CHAPTER XI

### METHODS OF STERILIZATION

IN many parts of the world the removal of the male generative cell-producing organs, i.e., the testes, has been practised from ancient days by religious ascetics and by the keepers of harems. Eunuchs, or castrated men, are employed to guard Eastern harems. The operation is usually performed in early childhood. It has been used among mental defectives in America, 72 cases being reported from 15 States up to January, 1921.<sup>1</sup>

Castration is the most complete and drastic method of destroying the procreative power in man, and ovariectomy in women. Both means have been used in America in specific cases. But vasectomy in men and salpingectomy in women are the usual methods of sterilization.

Endocrinology, or the science of the internal ductless glands, has shown clearly that both the testicles, the seminal vessels, and the ovaries have a very important influence upon the bodily chemistry and the health of human beings. The operations of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. H. H. Laughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 96. There are now twenty-one American States practising sterilization (1928).

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castration and of ovariectomy interfere seriously with the metabolism, and chiefly for that reason, they are less often performed than vasectomy and salpingectomy.

They are also more serious than the latter operations, which only involve the cutting of a duct, though in the case of women the operation is more complicated than in men.

### OPERATIONS ON THE MALE

#### *Vasectomy*

Vasectomy means the excision of a vessel. The vessel concerned in the sterilization operation upon males is the vas deferens, plural vasa deferentia, a tube that conveys the sperms from the testicle to the epididymus. A section of the vasa deferentia is removed, varying from a quarter of an inch to one inch. The tubes are reached through a small incision in the scrotum, or testicular bag. The external parts are first cleansed, and an anaesthetic, local or otherwise, is given to the patient. A few minutes only are necessary for an operation by a proficient surgeon.<sup>1</sup> There is very little bleeding. Beyond some local discomfort for a few days, there are no after effects, and rest is not essential.

The spermatic germs cease to appear after

<sup>1</sup> It is the usual procedure to tie, or "ligate," both ends of the severed ducts.

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vasectomy. No spermatozoa are produced, and the man is entirely sterile, though able to copulate.

Reference has already been made to the improvement in health, sometimes amounting to revitalization, in the case of ailing persons who are operated upon voluntarily.

### OPERATIONS ON THE FEMALE

#### *Salpingectomy*

Salpingectomy means the excision of a tube. In woman the oviducts, or Fallopian tubes, that carry the ova to the womb, are excised for the purpose of complete sterilization. This operation is often used in cases of diseased oviducts in perfectly sane persons, and is sometimes desired by women who wish to avoid a dangerous pregnancy. A small section of both tubes is excised.

The sterilization of women involves a more serious operation than in the case of men, because it necessitates the opening of the abdomen for the purpose of reaching the ducts. Salpingectomy can also be performed through the vagina. Only a small aperture is necessary in the case of abdominal operations for sterilization.

The operation is done under an anæsthetic, and may not require more than fifteen minutes. Rest and some after-care of the patient are needed.

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### *Ovariotomy*

This is a major operation corresponding to castration of the male. The removal of both ovaries destroys the productive capacity, and to some extent interferes with the endocrine balance. For this reason, a portion of one ovary is sometimes preserved, in cases that come under ordinary surgical practice. Ovariotomy is also termed oöphorectomy.

If one ovary is left untouched, pregnancy can occur; therefore double ovariotomy is essential for sterilization. The operation can be performed through the vagina, or by an incision of the abdominal wall.

After treatment some weeks of complete rest are necessary. In former times ovariotomy was often fatal, but since the discovery of antiseptics the mortality rate is low, probably 5 or 6 per cent.

Removal of the ovaries and oviducts (salpingo-oöphorectomy) has been practised for eugenic purposes in the United States, in a small proportion of cases. The removal of the womb (hysterectomy) is not practised eugenically, but in cases of serious internal growths it is sometimes essential.

### OTHER METHODS

Various alternative means for sterilizing women have been suggested and tried experimentally upon animals. Curetting or cauterizing the uterus has

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been successful in certain cases, but is not considered entirely effective. Electrical cauterization has also been used.

It has been found that frequent prolonged exposure to X-rays results in sterility in both sexes. Experiments on animals show that the ovaries are affected, and menstruation is not normal. In males, X-rays cause destruction of the seminiferous tubules, but does not appear to influence the interstitial glands of the testes.

It is anticipated that X-ray treatment may eventually be employed for sterilization purposes. At present the operations upon women are of a somewhat severe character, and an effective substitute would be satisfactory.



**CHAPTER XII**  
**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**



## CHAPTER XII

### LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE introduction of compulsory sterilization in the United Kingdom by statute will involve the careful framing of laws and regulations. It will be necessary first of all to educate the mass of the public in this vital national question, and to gain the support of legislators and the electorate. Sooner or later, every civilized country in the world will recognize the fact that the present system of race degeneration and national suicide must cease, and that a campaign of regenerative action is the only protection against national decline.

In America the legal requirements are thus described: "The power of the State to limit, in the interest of racial betterment, the reproduction of certain individuals characterized by defective hereditary traits is undoubted. The means used in exercising this power is a matter of legislative policy which lies with the legislative authority of the State."

"The only limitation which the courts have

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

imposed upon such authority in applying this particular social remedy, is that due regard must be had for the so-called bill of rights.”<sup>1</sup>

An important point for decision is whether sterilization by law shall be practised only on defectives in institutions, and not upon the hereditary unfit who remain at large. In America it is the opinion of expert investigators of hereditary tendencies that all cacogenic, or defective, persons in the legal sense should be sterilized in the national interest.

The New Jersey law was tested and opposed on the grounds of “class legislation,” the objection being that it referred to defective persons in custodial control, and not to degenerate types at large. In theory all legally sterilizable persons, pronounced by medical authority as unfit to continue the race, are liable, with the exception of epileptics, to compulsory sterilization.

It has been proposed, in the United States, that the enforced sterilization of females only would prove the most efficient means of preventing mental deficiency. It is held that eugenical sterilization limited to one sex would be constitutional.

In Iowa defectives are sterilized, in “certain very limited classes,” by consent of the subject and his or her relatives. The State must, in any case of eugenical sterilization, “prove to the satisfaction of the court or jury that the particular individual nominated for sterilization is, on account of his or

<sup>1</sup> Dr. H. H. Laughlin, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

her degenerate hereditary qualities, a serious menace to the racial qualities of the next generation.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the constitution of authority competent to decide in cases of sterilization, the chief officer is required to be qualified in eugenical science. He should receive a good salary and devote his whole time to his duties. The surgeons also must be thoroughly competent eugenists and operators, and be well remunerated. They should be appointed by the State Eugenicist.

Based on the practical working, legislative histories, and litigation resulting from twenty-three sterilization laws in fifteen different American states, the Psychopathic Laboratory of the Municipal Court of Chicago has issued a tentative Model Eugenical Sterilization Law, which is published in the valuable volume by Dr. Laughlin.

The principal points of the model sterilization law are the selection of socially inadequate persons and classes, cacogenic subjects, the office of State Eugenicist, and his qualifications and duties, case-histories, power to arrest, legal counsel for the State, jury's decision, judgment, appeals, liability, and illegal operations.

Respecting persons upon whom the operation should be compulsory, full investigation should be undertaken by the chief official "upon his own initiative or upon complaints lodged, or information given by an official, an organization or a citizen.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 443.

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

Proper provision must be made to defend the alleged degenerate person in court. If, in the decision of judge and jury, the defendant is found to be entirely unfit to procreate, he or she should be sterilized by a process ensuring that ‘the power to procreate offspring is permanently nullified.’ ”

The type of operation should be left to the discretion of the State Eugenicist upon consultation with duly qualified medical experts. It should be made quite clear that the State’s action is in no sense punitive, but purely eugenic.

Definition of “the socially inadequate classes,” in America, is the feeble-minded, insane, criminal, epileptic, inebriate, drug addict, diseased, i.e., tuberculous, syphilitic, leprous, and others with chronic infections, the blind, deaf, deformed, and dependent, including orphans, ne’er-do-wells, homeless, tramps and paupers. Of these classes there are individuals who, in the view of scientific authorities of full experience, must be described as cacogenic, or persons declared by legislation “to be potential parents of socially inadequate offspring.”

It is proposed in the model law that the chief officer, having decided that a person should be restrained from reproducing the species, must write a full report upon the subject, or “propositus,” showing sound or legal reasons for compelling sterilization.

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

### SUBJECTS FOR STERILIZATION

The statutes of sterilization in the United States describe clearly those defectives and habitual criminals who should be deprived of reproductive power for the well-being of the nation and posterity. In New York State the law is enforced upon such persons who "would produce children with an inherited tendency to crime, insanity, feeble-mindedness, idiocy, or imbecility." In Indiana the act is framed to prevent the procreation of confirmed criminals, idiots, imbeciles, or rapists.

Washington legalizes the sterilization of the feeble-minded, insane, epileptic, habitual criminals, moral degenerates, and sexual perverts.

In the amendment to the Second Sterilization Law in California, emphasis is laid on the relation of heredity to social degeneracy. Any person "who is afflicted with mental disease which may have been inherited and is likely to be transmitted to descendants, the various grades of feeble-mindedness, those suffering from perversion or marked departures from normal mentality or from disease of a syphilitic nature."

In Section Two of the Oregon law the subjects are persons "potential to producing offspring, who, because of inheritance of inferior or anti-social traits, would probably become a social menace or a ward of the State."

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

In Iowa the convictions for felony constitute a confirmed criminal, and such were liable to sterilization. This statute was repealed in the case of inmates of prisons, but not of inmates of hospitals for the insane, provided permission is given by the next-of-kin. In New York the sterilization of inveterate criminals is at the discretion of the court.<sup>1</sup>

In Kansas, it is necessary for the wardens and superintendents of penitentiaries, reformatories, State Hospital, State Home for Feeble-minded, and State Industrial School for Girls to certify in writing to the Governing Board that an inmate could be improved mentally and prevented from procreation by an operation. Before subsequent action, subject to the consent of the Board, notice shall be served on such inmate, and relatives or guardians, of a meeting at which the inmate has the right to be represented by counsel, and may introduce such evidence as may be desired.<sup>2</sup>

In the event of the propositus being found unfit to reproduce, it is decided whether the eugenical operation shall be in the case of a male vasectomy or asexualization, and in a female of salpingectomy or oophorectomy.

In Nebraska, feeble-minded subjects are not discharged from institutions on parole, without undergoing sterilization.

<sup>1</sup> A full account of the Sterilization Statutes in America will be found in the book on "Eugenical Sterilization," by Dr. H. H. Laughlin.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

"The nature, character, and consequence of such operation" is explained to each person upon whom the operation is ordered to be performed, also to the husband, wife, parent, guardian, or nearest of kin. No operation is performed without the written consent of relatives and the assent of the inmate.

### THE QUESTION OF PAROLE

Is it safe for the community at large to release on parole an inmate of an institution for the insane or mentally defective? The question is one for serious consideration. Even in certain institutions, both in Great Britain and elsewhere, cases may occur in which even detained girls might become pregnant. To let such subjects out on parole would be a serious risk.

No doubt every precaution is taken in all well-conducted institutions to guard against the release of feeble-minded persons of a hopelessly irresponsible type. Nevertheless, there must always be much risk in the temporary or permanent release of an ament from protective custody, unless he or she is effectively sterilized. The enormous cost of the maintenance of the mentally deficient is an inducement to the authorities, in the interest of the State, to give liberty to a proportion of the afflicted. There are instances in which a high-grade ament may be safely released, if sterilized; but this does not apply to a very large number of certifiable persons.



**CHAPTER XIII**  
**THE EUGENIC CONSCIENCE**



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EUGENIC CONSCIENCE

AMONG the Western nations, threatened by a process of decline, nothing is more necessary for arrest of degeneration than the development of a social spirit, which has been called the Eugenic Conscience. Unfortunately, the asocial types of men and women are not uncommon in every civilized part of the globe. There are always people in a community who shift all the responsibility of the group upon other shoulders. "Why should I trouble about posterity? What has posterity done for me?" These cynical evasions of social duty are deplorably frequent, even among citizens in advanced nations.

The present generation, as well as the next, is concerned seriously with the prevalent signs of degeneration. National decline is inevitable, unless there is a full awakening of national and social conscience in regard to civic conduct in the matter of reproduction.

The grave question of the hour is whether the population of Great Britain is being bred chiefly from its best stock. The eugenical answer must be a

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decided negative. As Bertrand Russell warns us: "The most intelligent individuals, on the average, breed least, and do not breed enough to keep their numbers constant. Unless new incentives are discovered to induce them to breed, they will soon not be sufficiently numerous to supply the intelligence needed for maintaining a highly technical and elaborate system. Further, we must expect, at any rate for the next hundred years, that each generation will be congenitally stupider than its predecessor," and "we shall gradually become incapable of wielding the science we already have."<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that birth control, as now widely practised in Europe and America, has had a dysgenic effect. The reason is that only the intelligent among the population of the Western nations practise contraceptive methods, while the grossly unintelligent breed recklessly. Intelligence is being swamped by stupidity. Such disaster can only be prevented by the interdiction of procreation among the feeble-minded, and by a wider diffusion of sound knowledge upon birth control among the populace.

It is futile to hope that an unintelligent population will be likely to develop a eugenic conscience. The remedy is the steady reduction of amentia by sterilization, and education in the science of procreation. These measures should be supported by the State. There should be chairs of eugenics and sex psychol-

<sup>1</sup> "Whither Mankind." Volume containing article on "Science," by Hon. Bertrand Russell, 1928.

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ogy in the universities, and all teachers of general subjects, in all the schools, should be instructed in these questions before they attempt to educate the new generation.

The eugenic conscience might be aroused by the churches, if the clergy and preachers were more aware of their moral and social responsibility. The Church has done little for sexual science.<sup>1</sup> It has hindered, rather than aided, the eugenistic movement, birth control, and sex education. Here is a great opportunity for the churches to regain the steadily waning attention of the mass of the people. The eugenic conscience should be the chief article in the new creed of a practical religion.

A few generations of fortunate marriages give geniuses and valuable citizens to the nation; but unfortunate hereditary influences produce a vast mass of the dull-witted, feeble-minded, insane, and criminal. Sound family stock is the chief national need at the present critical stage of our civilization.

An enormous C<sub>3</sub> population, mentally and physically, must be the inevitable consequence of laxity in social conscience. The child should be trained in a civism that places the importance of being a good animal in the first rank in the educational system. Less teaching of negative morality and wider teaching of positive social ethics is the desideratum for the cultivation of the eugenic

<sup>1</sup> See "The Place of Sex in Life," by Canon Pyr

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conscience. There is a lamentable indifference to the finer morality of sex among those who are strongest in their denunciation of sexual immorality. Is it not more injurious to the community to procreate insane and diseased offspring than to infringe the ordinary code of chastity?

It may seem incredible that any members of the State should desire the production of stupid or feeble-minded persons. Nevertheless, there are certain chiefs of industry, who realize shrewdly that a highly developed intelligence is not satisfied by the perpetual tending of one machine and a constant mechanical routine of labour. In other words, in some monotonous forms of machine work, there is a demand for dull-minded workers, who will contentedly follow tasks, year in and year out, that require only automatic attention.

Mr. Arthur Pound has personified the present mechanical age in the "Iron Man"; and Professor Pear states that: "Just as deafness is an advantage in certain industrial occupations, so mental lacks may become assets for certain industrial purposes. Given enough sense to master simple routine occupations, and enough appreciation of duty, or fear of relatives, to come to the shop regularly, the below-average person can soon be adjusted industrially. And, when adjusted, the moron will be found immune to many of the pricks which irritate the normal man into seeing red, less fretted by monotony, less worn by rhythmic clatter." Professor Pear states: "I

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have heard industrial engineers and welfare workers say that industrial efficiency, as working out in our day, puts a premium on mental deficiency.”<sup>1</sup>

The state that places the production of machine-made things as of deeper importance than the production of sound and able citizens is without a eugenic conscience, and is doomed to destruction through the preponderance of the unintelligent over the intelligent. Tarde, the French sociologist, said that the time might come when the care of human life would be considered of higher import in a nation than the accumulation of wealth through excessive industrial toil. That day will not dawn until the whole of the intelligentsia and humanistic reformers combine to arouse a patriotic eugenic conscience.

It is stated by the Board of Control that there are about “ twenty thousand mental defectives for whom institutional care is required, but is not obtainable.” Economically, it is far less costly to segregate the feeble-minded in institutions or colonies than to permit them to increase the cost of the Poor Law and the prison service, through pauperism and crime. From the humanitarian standpoint, it is kinder to separate the mental defective from the normal, with whom he is not fit to compete in the present-day fierce struggle for subsistence. Not only does the national conscience allow a host of the feeble-minded to shift as best they can and to breed at

<sup>1</sup> “Fitness for Work,” Professor T. H. Pear, 1928.

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will, but a number of the actually insane are not receiving proper hospital treatment. Here again the economy is false and the humanitarian spirit lacking.

Eugenics may be elevated in public esteem to the dignity of a national religion, but the time is not yet. It is difficult to forecast. All great reforms in England are notoriously slow. And not one person in ten takes an intelligent interest in social hygiene. Eugenical propaganda was, and is still to some extent, banned by the newspapers. There are publicists who, blindly or wilfully, distort the teaching of eugenics. In the schools the meaning of the word is unknown.

Probably a constant insistence on the cost of mental deficiency and insanity, to the taxpayer's pocket, will have more influence than an endeavour to inspire a great idealistic faith in the betterment of civilized mankind through eugenical measures.

The progress in sanitation cannot be said to have affected the prevalence of mental unfitness. The general health of a nation may be fairly high, with a large proportion of feeble-mindedness and habitual crime. We must seek fundamental causes of degeneration, and the chief source is in the germ plasm. The root must be destroyed, and humane sterilization is the only means so far devised by science.

*“Future generations will, probably with a kind of horror, look back at a period when the most important,*

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*and in its consequences the most far-reaching, function which has fallen to the lot of man was entirely left to individual caprice and lust.”<sup>1</sup>*

Writing upon defective and anti-social human beings, Havelock Ellis remarks: “In old theological language it was often said that such were ‘children of the Devil,’ and Luther himself was often ready to attribute the evil of the world to the direct interposition of the Devil. Yet all these ill-conditioned people who clog the wheels of society are, after all, in reality the children of Man. The only Devil whom we can justly invoke in this matter is Man.”<sup>2</sup>

Ellis holds the view that “the question of the procreation of the race should gain a new significance, and even tend to take on the character of a new religion.” This will, let us trust, become the hope of all patriotic Britons. “The claim of the race is the claim of religion.”

Sir Francis Galton, too, saw the possibility of raising race generation to a religion. “Eugenics is a virile creed,” he wrote, “full of hopefulness, and appealing to many of the noblest feelings of our nature.”

The voluntary control of procreation would undoubtedly diminish the amount of mental deficiency, insanity, and physical disorders. Who among the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Westermarck, “The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas,” Vol. II, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> “Sex in Relation to Society,” p. 579.

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older generation can say that they were earnestly enjoined in their youth to choose only mates capable of reproducing fine physical, mental, and moral qualities? How many young men and women of to-day are interested seriously in race improvement, and able to appreciate their personal responsibility in this matter? The answer must be only a minute minority. As it is, the unfit are offered every opportunity for prolific breeding. No one tells the average adolescent that it is a crime to produce degenerate children. The parent, the teacher, and the priest are silent.

Young married couples are often exhorted to produce large families, on the assumption that large families are the healthiest and happiest. This misconception is one source of the immense proportion of dysgenic births. It has been proved uncontestedly that large families tend to bodily and mental degeneration.

Havelock Ellis, quoting Marro, writes that nervously unsound and abnormal persons often imagine that they "have a special aptitude to procreate fine children." "I believe that everyone has a special vocation," said a man to Marro; "I find that it is my vocation to beget superior children." He begat four—an epileptic, a lunatic, a dipsomaniac, and a valetudinarian—and himself died insane. Most people have come across somewhat similar, though perhaps less marked, cases of this delusion. In a matter of such fateful gravity

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to other human beings, no one can safely rely on his own unsupported impressions.<sup>1</sup>

This common procreative irresponsibility results in three ways: It is an act inflicting personal life-long suffering upon a human being. It is a source of after-anxiety for the parents of a hopelessly unfit child, and it is a sin against the nation, posterity and the race. While procreation is left to "caprice and lust," there can be no advance in national hygiene.

It has been urged that it is impossible to control effectually a passion so powerful as sex-love, and that any interference with the expression of this instinct will be strongly resisted and defied. If it was a fact that eugenical sterilization destroyed the capacity for the love emotion, and the satisfaction of natural desire, the argument would carry more force. The sterilization methods of vasectomy and salpingectomy, as we have seen, do not diminish inclination or potency.

In America, a considerable number of high grade aments, who have been granted liberty after undergoing sterilization, have fallen in love and married. Recorded cases show that most of these unions are successful. Marriage has been actually encouraged by eugenic measures. Writing of these unions an English investigator states: "Where the marriage is successful, it is surely a triumph of the modern way of handling the mental defective. I saw two

<sup>1</sup> "Sex in Relation to Society," p. 592.

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typical homes, one in town, and one in country, of married sterilized girls, and could only wish that such a prospect was possible for girls of the same type whom I know in this country.”<sup>1</sup>

Instead of taking precautions, which, while they protect society and the race, do not involve sexual deprivation, we leave our aments intact, and permit them to perpetuate their kind. In the name of “humanity,” we refrain from sterilization prophylaxis, totally disregarding the truth that it is obviously humane to protect the unborn and the living against one of the great scourges of modern civilization.

Years ago, Darwin announced that sexual selection in human beings should be controlled by avoiding unions of two persons who are manifestly defective or incurably diseased. We still sanction the marriage of mental defectives and syphilitics. “Man scans with scrupulous care the character and pedigree of his horses, cattle, and dogs, before he matches them, but when he comes to his own marriage, he rarely, or never, takes such care. Yet he might by selection do something, not only for the bodily construction and frame of his offspring, but for their intellectual and moral qualities.”

<sup>1</sup> “Sterilization in Practice,” C. B. S. Hodson, *Eugenics Review*, April, 1929.

CHAPTER XIV  
TERRIBLE FAMILIES



## CHAPTER XIV

### TERRIBLE FAMILIES

DEGENERACY in intelligence, in the original progenitors of a long line of descendants, produces an alarming number of congenital criminals, mendicants, paupers, idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded, prostitutes, and more or less unfit persons, who in a large majority, become charges upon the State. These dysgenic families are appallingly numerous in all the civilized communities, and the grave problem of the present time is how to protect society and posterity against their terrible hereditary defects, as manifested in mental and moral deficiency, asocial traits, disease, habitual crime and pauperism.

The new classic monograph on a degenerate family, "The Jukes," by Robert L. Dugdale, has probably achieved more than any other eugenical study in arousing the public interest in race regeneration. This examination of the sources of crime, pauperism, and disease in a single family stock is a sociological work of great importance; and it should be in the library of every intelligent citizen.

Professor Franklin H. Giddings, of Columbia

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

University, writes in his foreword to the fourth edition of "The Jukes": "It is doubtful if any concrete study of moral forces is more widely known, or has provoked more discussion, or has incited a larger number of students to examine for themselves the immensely difficult problems presented by the interaction of 'heredity' with 'environment.' "

In his preface the author remarks: "I am informed that 28,000 dollars was raised in two days to purchase a rare collection of antique jewellery and bronzes recently discovered in classic ground, forty feet below the *débris*. I do not hear of as many pence being offered to fathom the *débris* of our civilization, however rich the yield."

### HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The organic characteristics of the individual are fixed, in the opinion of the investigator of the Jukes degeneracy, by heredity, and environment affects modifications in that heredity. The whole question of "nature and nurture," and environment versus heredity, could only be discussed adequately in a lengthy volume. Since Mr. Dugdale's study was first published, we have learned, through the researches of Weismann, Mendel, and other inquirers, that environment plays a minor part in the production of good or bad stock, and that in spite of favourable surroundings, there is always a tendency to reversion, or "throwing back," to certain types.

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The modifications induced by a good environment, in the case of high-grade aments, and to some extent among hereditary criminals, is by no means to be disparaged, but should be thankfully acknowledged and encouraged. But a study of the Jukes clan should convince any reflective person that environment of the best kind, even were it possible, would not remove the risk of a fateful procreation of degenerate offspring.

As prophylaxis, the right hygienic, educative, and humane environment has its results, but in a very minor degree. We can only banish unfitness by ceasing to breed the unfit.

### THE GENESIS OF THE JUKES

Between 1720 and 1740, a man named Max, of Dutch descent, lived in a wild part of the State of New York. He was an idler and hard drinker, who worked by spurts. In old age he became blind, and the infliction descended upon his children and grandchildren. Max, like most degenerates, was prolific, and left many offspring, some of whom were illegitimate.

Two of the sons of Max married two of six sisters, called "Jukes" in Mr. Dugdale's exhaustive history. One of these sisters, Ada, was the progenitor of the criminal line in this degenerate family. The number of descendants of five of the Jukes sisters registers 540 blood relations, and 169 by marriage or cohabita-

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

tion, altogether 709 persons. "The aggregate of this lineage reaches probably 1,200 persons."

### CRIMINAL TENDENCIES

A large proportion of the Jukes were criminals, constantly in gaol and supported by the government. Their offences were larceny, small and large, burglary, forgery, false pretences, robbery, assault, intent to kill, and murder. Mr. Dugdale found that crime is most common in the illegitimate lines, and that the eldest child has a tendency to crime. Nine of Ada Juke's line spent sixty years in prison for 54 per cent. of crimes against property, and Effie's descendants show 30 per cent. of petty offences, and 30 per cent. of crimes against the person. One member of this unfortunate family committed theft at thirty, and was sent to gaol, and at forty-nine was condemned for five years for a rape upon a niece of twelve. Another connection served fourteen years in prison for burglary. About 30 per cent. were habitual drunkards. Disease and crime tend to age degenerates, and the criminal types of low vitality become paupers in old age. There are many syphilitics among habitual criminals, who dower their unhappy offspring with disease as well as a tendency to crime.

## TERRIBLE FAMILIES

### SEXUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Examination of the Jukes' record shows very plainly that the mental and moral decadent has no control over the sex impulse. Bell Juke was promiscuous in her sex relations before marriage, and bore three illegitimate black children, and one white. Several of the female posterity of this woman were described as "harlots," and some became professional prostitutes. Others were brothel and rum-shop keepers. Several were syphilitic.

The female descendants of Effie Juke, who had four children, were, in several instances, sexual irresponsibles, prostitutes, and syphilitics. Ada Juke was promiscuous in sex matters, and had several harlot descendants, keepers of houses of ill-fame, and syphilitic subjects. It will be noted in all histories of degenerate families that the males tend to crime and the females to its analogue, prostitution.

From the female side we get prostitution, with its inevitable venereal disease, that is often passed on to the third generation, and in many instances these women produce three, four, or more degenerate children. On the male side are habitual criminals, alcoholics, wasters, syphilitics, physical and mental degenerates, mostly maintained at the cost of the State.

Even strict segregation does not prevent entirely

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the risk of aments procreating and bearing offspring. There are recorded cases of girls who have escaped from institutional restraint and become pregnant. Instances have been also given of the seduction of mental defectives by male warders in public institutions.

Male sexual irresponsibility is quite as marked as the female among mental defectives and semi-insane criminals, the only difference being that the women often resort to prostitution as a means of subsistence. The ranks of prostitution abound with morons who find in that profession a means of earning a livelihood that does not demand a high order of intelligence. Obviously, these mentally defective prostitutes are more likely to be infected by venereal disease, and to infect others, than women of normal intelligence. It should be remembered that, among sane and intelligent persons of both sexes, erotic irresponsibility is common. How futile, therefore, is the suggestion that control can be taught to aments lacking a conception of social conduct in the restraint of their strongest instincts.

## PAUPERISM

A large number of the Jukes stock were paupers, maintained at the cost of the taxpayer, temporarily or permanently. Among the paupers we find the worst cases of feeble-mindedness, the criminals showing a somewhat higher standard of intelligence

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in both sexes. Many of the criminals, who are without a trade, become State paupers in old age.

Among English tramps and cadgers, and American hoboes, a large proportion are mentally deficient. The end of the habitual tramp's career is mostly in the Poor Law institution. Most of these nomads form illicit sexual connections, and some give birth to bastards, born in workhouses. Professional tramps are at all times, and in all civilized countries, parasites, who are a burden on the back of the taxpayer.

Handicapped by heredity, the ament finds it difficult to compete with mentally sound persons in obtaining employment, and many of the feeble-minded are practically forced into crime or mendicancy. Sterilization on eugenical principles would undoubtedly diminish pauperism in the United Kingdom, and reduce the ever-increasing rates and taxes that oppress a vast number of honest and hard-working people.

## PHYSICAL DISEASE

As we have seen, feeble-minded subjects are frequently subnormal in the power of resistance to diseases. Considering the fact that a vast mass of so-called "educated" persons in the civilized nations are habitually unhygienic, we may be sure that the mental defectives are incapable of following the common rules of healthy living.

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Amentia must then be regarded, not only as a cause of hereditary feeble-mindedness, but also as a source of diseases affecting the body, such as consumption, syphilis, gonorrhœa, and skin maladies. The homes of mental defectives living at large are insanitary, and a source of danger to neighbours and the community. The sick or infirm ament is to be found in all parts of the kingdom, at liberty, or in State institutions. The ratepayer is made responsible for the maintenance of thousands of the mentally and physically unfit, who should not have been born in an already over-populated country, with an enormous number of unemployed persons receiving a State dole.

### THE KALLIKAK FAMILY

A study of these unfortunate victims of a bad heredity shows, as in the case of the Jukes, that mental deficiency is one of the chief evils of civilization. The ancestors of the Kallikaks lived in a farming district of the United States, and for six generations the clan had been notorious for feeble-mindedness and crime. Wherever descendants have been traced, "an appalling amount of defectiveness" was found among them.

Another branch of the Kallikaks has been called "the good family," and its members are the children of the same father as "the bad family," but descended from a normal mother. The progenitors

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of a long line of defectives were Martin Kallikak, senior, a young military officer, who consorted for a time with a feeble-minded girl, who bore an illegitimate son. This son was Martin Kallikak, junior, the founder of a stock of 480 descendants, of whom 143 were aments, and only 46 have been found normal, the rest being unknown or doubtful. The complete unfitness of the Kallikak family as procreators of useful and healthy citizens is shown clearly by the record of sexual irresponsibility, alcoholism, epilepsy, and criminality.

Eleven hundred and forty-six individuals of the Kallikak group have been recorded in America. The cost to the government for their care in institutions and alms-houses has been colossal.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Goddard, the author of the valuable study of these degenerates, states that the moron type of feeble-minded persons affords the most serious problem for society. Only one-tenth of the number of defectives in America are under care. The rest are breeding in many instances. "What is to be done?" asks Dr. Goddard. There must be more training institutions and colonies for the feeble-minded, especially for the young.

Regarding sterilization, Dr. Goddard points out a strong public opposition. He states of the vasectomy operation that "many good results have been claimed," and no bad results reported. He says

<sup>1</sup> "The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness," Henry Herbert Goddard, Ph.D., 1925.

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that it is no cause for alarm that sterilization will increase sex vice and venereal disease. The conclusion reached from this examination is that social pests are the heirs of the feeble-minded, and that we need to know more concerning the laws of human inheritance, and proceed carefully in the task of race preservation.

### THE NAMS

In 1911-12 Dr. Estabrook and Dr. Charles B. Davenport, under the direction of the Eugenics Record Office of Cold Spring Harbour, made an inquiry into an inbred rural community in New York State. The Nams are descended from a Dutch immigrant and an Indian princess. The clan lived as nomads for a large part, but some were grouped in and around a farm known as Nam Hollow. Among the Nams are a remarkable number of chronic inebriates and wastrels, i.e., 88 per cent. of females and 90 of males. Altogether, 1,795 individuals have been studied. An enormous proportion of the Nam females have been "harlots." Nineteen of the family are epileptics, 24 are insane, and 40 are convicted criminals. It is estimated that these degenerates have cost the United States taxpayers over 1,411,676 dollars. Taking one case of the Nam degeneracy, without specialized selection, we find that in Case 2 (V 219):

"This man belongs to a fraternity of five, of whom

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two committed incest and two others are erotomaniacs; one sister is epileptic; another, though an erotomaniac, is industrious, ambitious and quick in actions. Their mother was an illegitimate child and was a lazy harlot; their father was industrious but committed incest on a daughter. The home conditions were those of paupers. V 219 was born in Vermont, 1880, and when young was adopted and reared by good people, but in spite of that he developed 'the characteristics of the blood.' He was irascible, inefficient, indolent, unambitious, alcoholic, and, though he married a good woman, he has become a pauper."

It is significant that, in the view of the two doctors who undertook the inquiry into the Nam family history, the placing out of mental defectives in better families and institution life give a "Veneer of culture and tends to strengthen the sex impulses, but that the effect is uncertain and frequently discouragingly slight." The summing-up of the investigators is that social prophylaxis is necessary. There is first the policy of *laissez faire*. The Nam family can take care of itself; then why do anything? But the one original bad family has its offsets, numerous families that have wandered to Minnesota and other places, and become centres of degeneration. "Harlots go forth from here and become prostitutes in our great cities. The tendency to larceny, burglary, arson, assault, and murder have gone, with the wandering bodies in which they are incorporated, throughout

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the State and to great cities like New York. Nam Hollow is a social pest spot whose virus cannot be confined in its own limits."

Some improvement might result from the teaching of housekeeping, elementary hygiene, and so on; but the third generation would not be saved from amentia. Scattering the tribe might lead to healthier marriage, but there would be a risk of spreading idleness and insanity, for the like dislike union with the unlike.

As a fourth proposed measure, the unfit could be confined throughout the reproductive period in one of the State colonies. It is doubtful if the State would consent to sterilization.<sup>1</sup> Eight to ten children are born in a single family of the Nam group, and very many are illegitimate. Pauperism, alcoholism, crime, and mental inefficiency is the heritage of these children in the great majority of instances.<sup>2</sup> It is a lamentable reflection that the higher civilized states of the world do not realize that they are breeding in a prodigal manner from their worst stock.

### OTHER CACOGENIC FAMILIES

In Great Britain, little or nothing has been schemed or undertaken in the way of scientific legal inquiry into the antecedents of the mentally defective and the

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1912.

<sup>2</sup> "The Nam Family: A Study in Cacogenics," 1912, Eugenics Record Office, Memoir No. 2.

## TERRIBLE FAMILIES

habitual criminal. The American records are of the highest sociological and hygienic value, carefully compiled, and very informing as to the genesis and perpetuation of feeble-mindedness. We lag behind other nations in this urgent reform, and if we do not awaken soon from our inertia, our sons and all future citizens will be called upon to contribute to the maintenance and care of an enormous multitude of the unfit and the hopelessly degenerate.

In Switzerland, considerable scientific inquiry has been made into the causes of amentia and its remedy. It has been shown that a tainted family, the Zeros, produced 310 aments, criminals, vagrants and paupers, who were mostly a charge on the public funds. The Jukes group gave 709 descendants of the worst type. In England, there are families of feeble-minded persons providing the fullest material upon which to form useful data concerning hereditary traits and tendencies. It is time that the work of research was subsidized duly by the State, and that inquirers of the right training were appointed to write full records of typical mentally defective and recidivist subjects.

In Indiana, the Ishmaelites have been studied, and it has been found that the feeble-minded strain produced an enormous amount of pauperism. Again, Poellmann has written upon a family notorious for prostitution and procurers.

Sir Francis Galton's work upon "Hereditary Genius" has demonstrated how good families are produced. We need an extensive research into the

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genetics of the bad family. Only by the accumulation and dissemination of the facts of our menacing national degeneration will the public be aroused to a legislative reform which has been perilously delayed.

**CHAPTER XV**  
**MARRIAGE OF MENTAL DEFECTIVES**



## CHAPTER XV

### MARRIAGE OF MENTAL DEFECTIVES

WHERE a man and woman unite in marriage and give children to the community, they become responsible to society for the care and maintenance of the family. They are also morally responsible, if they produce a number of unfit citizens, while they apprehend that they owe a duty to their heirs and to the State. No consideration of racial morality, or social duty, will, however, deter many persons from giving life knowingly to feeble and degenerate offspring. An average married pair desire children, and they bring them into the world deliberately, regardless of the eugenic aspect of their action. When contraception is practised, it is generally for monetary reasons.

Mental defectives are not capable of eugenical training. Like normal persons, they possess sexual instincts, and they are sufficiently intelligent in some cases to choose married life instead of promiscuous relations. If we deem it safe and wise to let high-grade aments control their own conduct, social and

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personal, there is no reason why they should not marry. There are, however, the strongest reasons why aments should not add to the number of the unfit by reproducing themselves.

As I have said, in the United States, a considerable number of morons, living in liberty, have married after undergoing the sterilization operation. Various witnesses assure us that these unions are successful, in some cases more successful, it is said, than the average conjugality of normally intelligent people. The domestic life of the sterilized mentally deficient may, therefore, be regarded as a matter not directly concerning the public.

No humane person would wish to deny the higher types of defectives, who have been debarred from exercise of the reproductive function, from such comfort as matrimony may yield. There are, nevertheless, a certain number of persons whose chief objection to sterilization of the unfit is that it offers facilities for the gratification of "lust," their contention being that all sex intercourse should be restricted to the main natural purpose of the act, i.e., reproduction. That the impulse resulting in the physiological conjunction of the sexes is purely "reproductive" is one of the absurd fictions that we have invented as a protest against the simply erotic motive, which is the real one with all animals, including mankind. The only manner in which the marriage of sterile defectives concerns the community is in regard to the capacity of the married couples to maintain them-

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selves. Apart from that, such unions may be regarded as a private matter only affecting the partners.

In England, perfectly intact and sexually potent feeble-minded and semi-insane persons are permitted to marry and produce as large a progeny as they choose. In the name of "the liberty of the subject," and with full religious sanction, even approval, two half-imbeciles, inveterate criminals, or epileptics may unite in wedlock, and recruit the ranks of the Great Unfit. Such unions are even encouraged deliberately, as the following extract will show:

"We have instances where a Local Authority and Visitors have suggested the discharge of feeble-minded women in order that they may be married; and, if a girl has become pregnant, public opinion would generally approve of her marriage, and disapprove of her recall to an institution."

"Our Local Authority tells us that they have knowledge of six defectives where petitions have been dismissed by the Judicial Authority in order to allow the defectives to get married, and also two others where the petitions were dismissed in order to allow two pregnant girls to marry." These instances seem to show that public opinion attaches more importance to the licit marriage of a pair of mental defectives than to the preservation of the race.

Everything possible should be done, in education of the public and legislative action, to inhibit the

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disastrous mating of the psychopathic, mentally deficient, and sufferers from chronic venereal diseases. We cannot hope to eradicate the dysgenic types from the community while the worst degenerates are free to reproduce as many unfortunate children as they choose.

Only the sterilized aments should be permitted to marry. There is the case of a high-grade feeble-minded girl, certified when she was eighteen, who had several situations and lost them. Three times she was convicted of stealing and placed on probation. Then a guardian was appointed, but her behaviour was so bad that she was transferred to a Poor Law institution. She came next under the protection of her father, and began a life of prostitution. Medical inspectors of the Board declared that the girl was unquestionably a mental defective. It was then discovered that she had been married a year, and she was discharged. Her husband was an unemployed labourer, drawing an allowance of twenty-five shillings a week, and he could not afford to keep her. Having no fixed abode, she slept out, and was charged, and later she was found sleeping in a fowl-house. She is being dealt with again under the Mental Deficiency Act.<sup>1</sup>

In another case a feeble-minded woman was taken from a mental hospital, by a sister, for a day's leave. As she did not return, inquiry was made; it was

<sup>1</sup> "Annual Report of the Board of Control," 1927, Part I, p. 47.

## MARRIAGE OF DEFECTIVES

found that she married a man of sixty-four. The ament was unable to understand the nature of the wedding ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

A mere lad, released on licence from a State institution, went to live with his father. Some time after, the father reported that the son was married and was the father of a child of nine weeks.

The above are instances that should provide food for thought for those who oppose sterilization on humanitarian grounds. No act can be more inhumane than the giving of life to children doomed inevitably to incurable disability or disease. Everywhere in the United Kingdom such fatal unions are contracted by uncertified mental defectives, and in some cases by aments who have been released on parole, or discharged as fit persons to live in the community.

We often hear gloomy predictions of "race suicide" from the opponents of birth control, who would, if they had the power, make contraception a crime. Race suicide will not come through restriction of the population, but through utterly reckless breeding. In the Report of the Board of Control for 1927, it is stated: "A careful study of the information before us leads to the conclusion that the marriage of defectives has disastrous consequences to the community, and that the time has come when definite legislative steps should be taken to prevent the marriage of those under order. Children born

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

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to parents whose histories are briefly indicated above are not likely to become healthy and useful citizens."

Not only do the feeble-minded inflict a scourge upon the nation by reproducing their defect in offspring; they also create a very bad environment for the rearing of children, and are in no sense fit to undertake the great responsibility of parentage.

A huge army of the children of feeble-minded parents are a permanent charge on the State purse. Many are paupers; some become criminals and are maintained at the public expense, and others are kept in institutions for the mentally deficient.

As we have seen in the histories of the Jukes and other unhappy families, marriage, illicit cohabitation, and promiscuous sexual relations are a source of constant peril to the nation, and the offspring of such sex relationships are a terrible economic dead-weight. The time has come for a great movement of responsible citizens of the State in the most pressing of social and national problems, the Salvation of the Race. Further prolongation of our inertia and delay will bring certain disaster.

In the last Government Report is this alarming statement: "We have again to record an increase in the number of defectives of whom the Local Authorities have knowledge." Further: "It is unbelievable that the incidence can ever fall so low as the figures given by a large proportion of Local Authorities."

CHAPTER XVI  
MENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR COST



## CHAPTER XVI

### MENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR COST

READERS unacquainted with the statistics of insanity, feeble-mindedness, and habitual criminality will, no doubt, be surprised if they examine the official records. Under the Mental Deficiency Act, there were, in the beginning of 1927, 79 certified institutions for cases under the Act. In these institutions on January 1st, 1928, there were 14,099 patients, an increase of 757 during the year.

At the same date there were 279 persons in certified houses and 456 in approved homes. Defectives under guardianship and in private care numbered 1,357, an increase of 280. In the Poor Law institutions the figures show 7,288 males and females. The Central Association for Mental Welfare have records of 39,016 cases of mental deficiency. "The increase in the number of cases refused by private persons is maintained, although with the growth of Local Associations, fewer Local Authorities have to seek the help of the Central Office."

The cost of the insane population in the county and borough mental hospitals in England and Wales during the financial year ended March 31st,

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1927, amounted to £7,803,804. These figures do not include any expenditure on new institutions not occupied at present. This record shows a total net increase of £218,411 as compared with the preceding financial year.

### AVERAGE WEEKLY COST PER HEAD

	s.	d.
In County Mental Hospitals	. 22	5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>
In Borough Mental Hospitals	. 25	6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>
In both taken together	. 23	2 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> <sup>1</sup>

These charges are exclusive of cost of repairs, additions and alterations.

### NUMBER OF COUNTY AND BOROUGH MENTAL HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS

In the London district alone there are twelve asylums, or mental hospitals, and nineteen licensed houses for the care of the mentally afflicted. There are five institutions in Lancashire and seven in the North and West Riding of Yorkshire, and one in York City. Essex has two mental hospitals, and Lincoln two. The complete list fills several pages of the 1927 Annual Report.

There are over thirty licensed houses for the care of mental patients in the Provinces, and two State

<sup>1</sup> "Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Control," pp. 15, 16.

## INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR COST

Institutions for Defectives at Rampton and Warwick. The Certified Institutions for Mental Defectives are very numerous. There are five in the Middlesex area, and seven in London. Surrey has seven, and Yorkshire three; other counties having one to four. There are also a large number of institutions approved under Section 37.

The approved homes for the feeble-minded number about twenty-five. There are five of such institutions in the London district, in which from twenty-four to thirty-seven male and female patients are under care. Although the list of hospitals, institutions, and homes is a very long one, there is, as I have stated, a serious shortage of accommodation for the ever-increasing number of mental patients.

### MENTALLY DEFECTIVE CRIMINALS

Broadmoor is the only mental hospital in the United Kingdom for the custody and care of irresponsible offenders against the law. A large number of feeble-minded and half-insane criminals are in the ordinary prisons throughout the country, and are supported at the public cost during their terms of incarceration. When released from convict prisons, or county gaols, these recidivists often beget or bear legitimate or illegitimate children, who, in their turn, become a burden on the country and a menace to society.

On every race-course in England a number of

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these undesirables may be seen, engaged in various nefarious methods of picking up a few coppers, or in stealing and begging. These types are habitual tramps, often charged with larceny or burglary, and other breaches of the law. They are all maintained recurrently by the patient taxpayer, who fails to recognize that eugenics has its economic benefit for the nation, and would reduce the burden of taxation.

Besides the great number of prisons, costing vast sums annually for upkeep and the maintenance of short and long sentence prisoners, there is the enormous expenditure upon police and detectives. So long as the congenital criminals are allowed to produce as many degenerate children as they choose, there must be a constant recruiting of the police force, and a vast expense in the detection and punishment of crime and delinquency.

Many crimes are the actions of the insane, or border-line, persons, incapable of recognizing moral and social codes, or the victims of morbid impulses. Among these offenders are the hopelessly incorrigibles of the Jukes type, strongly libidinous, and entirely lacking in self-control in the gratification of instinct.

Obsessional incendiaries (pyromaniacs) wander about the country, and often go undetected. Many habitual criminals are sadistic, and delight in the infliction of pain, such as Jack-the-Ripper, and the perverts who maim cattle. Most of these degenerates breed with the singular fecundity of all lower

## *INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR COST*

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types of animals. They and their ill-fated progeny are a perennial charge upon the State.

### COST OF PAUPERISM

Mental deficiency is closely associated with poverty, indigence, and destitution. The Poor Law institutions harbour inevitably a proportion of incapables, some of whom are actual aments and epileptics. The cost of permanent maintenance and casual relief of the feeble-minded paupers, mendicants, and road travellers is tremendous and cumulative. Many of these unfortunates are diseased and a source of danger to the community. In many cases, they are constantly in and out of the public infirmaries. These people often have large families of sickly or degenerate children, potentially dysgenic types, likely to become chargeable to the State. The indigent feeble-minded man or woman can marry, and receive the blessing of the Church for the expenditure of a few shillings, earned by singing in the streets or begging. If they have children, and cannot support them, the State will provide.

Misguided charity encourages mendicancy and endangers the general welfare. There is perhaps no radical remedy for poverty in our over-populated country. But would it not be more humane and economical to check pauperism by the sterilization of the incurably unfit? The struggle of the fit is made ever crueler and keener by the toll laid upon them

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by the unfit. It is the unfit who can afford to marry and to produce a number of offspring, while marriage becomes almost economically impossible for an immense number of young, healthy, and efficient citizens. We can reduce pauperism enormously, if we cannot eradicate the evil entirely, by preventing hereditary poverty.

### COST OF PROSTITUTES AND VENEREAL DISEASE

As a big proportion, probably the majority, of lower and higher grade professional prostitutes are morons, the scourge of amentia is one source of the social problem of advanced nations. Venereal diseases, the consequence of prostitution, cost the nation an immense annual sum. Among the common carriers of these virulent disorders are a host of feeble-minded women and girls.

Sir Frederick Mott, and other eminent authorities, have testified at congresses that a very large proportion of men are entirely unaware that syphilis can be transmitted by various other means than sexual intercourse. If such ignorance is common among the sane and intelligent, how can we expect the mentally defective prostitute to guard against personal infection and to refrain from infecting other persons?

A very considerable number of sane girls to-day—"free lances," "cocottes"—know scarcely anything of sexual hygiene, and are sources of infection. In the case of the moron who leads "the gay life," the risk of spreading venereal diseases is trebled.

CHAPTER XVII  
REPORT OF THE MENTAL DEFICIENCY  
COMMITTEE, 1929



## CHAPTER XVII

### REPORT OF THE MENTAL DEFICIENCY COMMITTEE, 1929

THE third part of this important Report has aroused considerable public attention, chiefly through the extracts that have appeared in the newspapers, and the leading articles upon the question of feeble-mindedness and the practical prevention of the evil.

It is admitted that the number of persons of all ages in England and Wales "would not fall far short of 340,000." The increase in the figures is attributed to more complete ascertainment; also to the reduction of infant mortality, the greater longevity of defectives due to improved hygienic conditions, and a somewhat different interpretation of the standards. The inquiry shows that there are twice as many lower grade defectives than there were twenty years ago.

The general finding of the Report is that physical inefficiency, mental deficiency, chronic pauperism, and recidivism are all more or less closely related, and are the source of a major social evil; and that amentia is an incurable condition. The insane may

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be cured, and return from the mental hospital with a sound mind; but the feeble-minded require constant care.

The question of accommodation is urgent in the case of aments of the lower grade, and it is suggested that the high grade types can be protected adequately under supervision and guardianship. The morally defective and anti-social should be detained in institutions, as they are a menace to the community. The village colony is recommended, and also the approved home. Local Mental Deficiency Authorities in the country are advised to "set about making the requisite institutional provision for the defectives in their area." There could be a central colony, with subsidiary homes and hostels.

The question is asked, in the Report: "Are there any practical measures available which will secure a diminution in the future of the numbers of mentally defective persons?" There follow various proposals that are described as "purely tentative." One plan would be the complete segregation of all persons suffering from primary amentia. This subnormal group is made up of the insane, defective, epileptic, pauper, criminal, slum dwellers, prostitutes, and inebriates.

It would not be possible to treat primary amentia as a separate and independent problem. "The racial disaster of mental deficiency" can only be averted by dealing with a vast subnormal group of the population of the United Kingdom. Sterilization is

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discussed in the Report, and it is stated that "it would no doubt reduce the numbers of defectives in the next generation to some extent." But the view of the investigators is that sterilization, to be completely successful must be applied to 10 per cent. of the population, and that "this obviously is impracticable."

The committee reached the conclusion that there is considerable doubt as to the efficacy of sterilization, and that the evidence collected so far in regard to California is not conclusive. The objections on moral and humanitarian grounds are brought forward, and the fact is emphasized that it would be very difficult to obtain legal sanction for so large a reform. We have already examined the objections to sterilization, and there is not much to add to the declaration of the Board of Control.

Whether official bodies object or not, there is not the slightest doubt that an immensely increasing number of intelligent citizens in the European countries are strongly in favour of the sterilization of the incurably unfit. The committee appeared to be sceptical concerning the possibility of releasing a number of sterilized aments from custodial institutions. The recent inquiry in America, undertaken by the English Eugenics Society, proves that a number of sterilized mental defectives are able to support, or partly support, themselves, and that they marry and have comfortable home-life.

The relief of the over-taxed population, through

## STERILIZATION OF THE UNFIT

the reform, is not sufficiently studied in the Report, and there is not enough evidence adduced to show the inadequacy of sterilization. It is stated that few of the defectives now in institutions "would be fit to be restored permanently to live in the community." Yet we have now at large in this country a number of subnormals who are producing big families. Many of these, as the Report shows clearly, are quite disqualified from healthy parentage. Until we correct this anomaly, it is scarcely necessary to adopt a hypercritical attitude to sterilization as a means of race regeneration.

It is stated plainly enough that the cost of segregating mental defectives is tremendous, and that the money for building an adequate number of institutions cannot be raised. "*The initial financial outlay for colonies and institutions is so heavy that it is well-nigh inconceivable that we should ever be able financially to provide colonies or institutional accommodation for all mental defectives, even if this were desirable.*"<sup>1</sup>

What does this imply? It is clear that, owing to the heavy expenditure, segregation on an adequate scale is impossible. There must, therefore, be an immense number of more or less dangerous mental defectives, to say nothing of hereditary criminals, always increasing the ranks of the unfit. Most of the evidence brought forward by the advocates of environmental influence, education, and training, as against

<sup>1</sup> Part III, p. 90. Italics are mine.

## MENTAL DEFICIENCY COMMITTEE

sterilization, is hardly convincing. Education is unfortunately powerless to affect the germ-plasm.

It is suggested that the segregating colonies should be "fluid"; that is to say, the colony should be "always taking in and always sending out." The risk of such a system is surely manifest. A proportion of the discharged morons would undoubtedly marry and increase the ament population, and a proportion would give birth to illegitimate children.

The inadequacy of complete control in custody is repeatedly pointed out in the 1929 Report on Adult Defectives. "There is no prospect, at any rate in the near future, of sufficient institutional accommodation being provided for all the mentally defective persons in the country who need it, and the majority of them must for many years to come remain amongst the general community."

Such an outlook is distinctly alarming. Is there no other practical course than leaving thousands of the incurably unsit to increase and multiply?



**CHAPTER XVIII**  
**AUTHORITATIVE VIEWS AND OPINIONS**



## CHAPTER XVIII

### AUTHORITATIVE VIEWS AND OPINIONS

WE have already seen the report of Mr. Justice McCardie's declaration at the Birmingham Assizes, in which he said : " In my view sterilization should be introduced at once. I believe it would help greatly towards reducing the grave state of mental deficiency which exists in many parts of the country."

This view will be endorsed by a considerable number of judges, magistrates, physicians, Poor Law guardians, and students of social conditions in all the civilized nations. There would be much plainer speaking on the part of authorities if we could overcome the national trait of diffidence and timidity in discussing sex questions. It is much to be regretted that some of our deepest social problems are neglected through this resistance against honest discussion.

Most of those who have hitherto considered it a public duty to warn the public against the menace of hereditary feeble-mindedness have been mental doctors, and lay students of social and national hygiene. The Eugenics Society has done very excellent work in the education of the public in the laws of heredity. But the bulk of citizens

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remain apathetic or very ill-informed respecting the significance of eugenics.

Professor J. Sully said, some years ago, that the younger generation are suffering from a "flaccid condition of the intellectual muscles." This dislike of intellectual exercise is marked in all classes of society, and the mass of people leave serious thinking to a very small minority instead of forming their own views.

As I have said in other pages, we must arouse public interest in the great question of race regeneration, through eugenic methods, by every means within our power before we can hope for any legislative action regarding the sterilization of the bad types from which we are now breeding recklessly.

We must look to the younger members of the medical profession for assistance in spreading eugenic information among the public, for they are in a position to speak with authority. Dr. Norman Haire is an energetic and well-equipped advocate of sexual reform and eugenics, and in a volume lately published, he states: "*Compulsory sterilization is not legal in England, though it is permitted or even prescribed by law in certain other countries. In my opinion, it is a measure desirable in the interest of racial health, and I have little doubt that its adoption in this country is only a matter of time.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Some More Medical Views on Birth Control," edited by Norman Haire, Ch.M., M.B.

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

In discussing birth control from the hygienic standpoint, Dr. F. A. E. Crew, lecturer on genetics, University of Edinburgh, refers to the dysgenic menace of procreating from the degenerate. "The reproduction of all stocks exhibiting characteristics admittedly undesirable and known to be inherited should be prevented."<sup>1</sup>

Education is the only means of saving the race. We have to learn how to "control the cosmic process," as Huxley declared, otherwise we shall certainly perish as a nation. Week after week, the journals of this country contain reports of police cases similar to the following :

A mother was placed on probation by the Croydon Bench for abandoning a male infant. She was twenty-six, and had previously abandoned the baby, and was often in the police custody. She was brought up in convent schools in Ireland, and had led a criminal life since 1925, having been charged with thieving, begging, and assault. The medical report showed that she was responsible for her actions, although perhaps she was on the borderline. Such social irresponsibles are continually procreating and bearing undesirable children, certain to be a burden on the community.

I have referred to the important fact that many aments are quite willing, and even eager that the vasectomy or salpingectomy operation shall be performed upon them. If any doubt upon this exists

<sup>1</sup> "Some More Medical Views on Birth Control," edited by Norman Haire, Ch.M., M.B.

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in the minds of readers, I would point out that a number of reputedly sane people actually desire castration, a far more drastic operation. Dr. Wilhelm Stekel writes: "I see every year masturbators, paraphiliacs, and homosexuals who want to be castrated."<sup>1</sup>

What is to be done in the case of an entirely incorrigible pyromaniac, who has committed arson sixteen times, and in the intervals of apparent sanity goes home to his mother from the asylum? This man is quite free to marry and produce irresponsible offspring, or to add to the number of illegitimate criminals and defectives.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Winship has contrasted the family of Jonathan Edwards with the Jukes, and shown convincingly that a good stock will ensure the perpetuation of desirable and useful citizens, while amentia, crime, pauperism, vice and disease spring from a single pair of degenerates. Environment and education cannot transform a feeble-minded man or woman into a normal being. It is heredity, not training, that determines the character traits and predisposition in animals, as every breeder of sporting dogs is aware. A "good nose" in a hound is not developed by environment alone.

Mental deficiency is the cause of many social ills

<sup>1</sup> "Peculiarities of Behaviour," Vol. II, p. 311. It should be explained that paraphilia is an interest in sexual perversions.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

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that are not commonly associated with it in the public mind. Every advanced nation has tried to grapple with the slum problem, without realizing that "no amount of work in the slums or removing the slums from our cities will ever be successful until we take care of those who made the slums what they are."<sup>1</sup> No great efforts to reform the prostitute class or to rescue girls from the traffic, can have marked results while we fail to deal with one of the main roots of the evil—feeble-mindedness in women. "There are Kallikak families all about us. They are multiplying at twice the rate of the general population," says Dr. H. H. Goddard.

It is said that sterilization is "repugnant to modern ideals." A moral idealism that refrains from radical action on purely sentimental grounds is an injurious idealism, and must be judged as anti-social. The facts are plain: feeble-mindedness is inherited, and the only means of coping with its dire effects on the nation at large is by inhibiting the breeding of mental defectives.

It is a strange "humanitarianism" that shrinks from depriving a proportion of the degenerates of society from the capacity to hand on their fatal qualities to descendants. Is it humane to spare the few and permit the mass to suffer? No ament has been injured by sterilization; the results point the other way. Moreover, scores of mental defectives

<sup>1</sup>H. H. Goddard, "The Kallikak Family," pp. 70, 71.  
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request that the operation shall be performed upon them.

A number of criminal aments are severely punished for their irresponsible impulsive actions. Is this humane? Is it justice? Charles Oxnam, a youth, was executed in California, though eight physicians and four psychologists declared him to be mentally defective.<sup>1</sup> The punishment of the feeble-minded delinquent and criminal is neither rational nor humane. We should not allow these types to be born.

Among one hundred cases of juvenile delinquency in America, Goddard found 66 per cent. of feeble-minded subjects. In Germany, out of 134 cases, Monkenmoller found 50 per cent.

"Like begets like." A family character is in the germ cell and is passed on inevitably. As Maudsley said: "No man can escape the tyranny of his organization." The leopard cannot change his spots. And who, by taking thought, can add a cubit to his stature? All are not created equal.

<sup>1</sup> Chas. W. Waddle, Ph.D., "Introduction to Child Psychology."

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